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ABSTRACT

The monograph describes the Community Learning Center (CLC) model and process, which resulted from a University System of New Hampshire project conducted in six small New Hampshire towns between July 1973 and June 1974. The development involved a non-school, learner-controlled base, headed by groups of citizens called "core groups," who acquired the skills necessary to organize informal non-credit, tuition-free learning activities taught by the community volunteers. Learning activities included: classes, clubs, town improvement efforts, recreational pursuits, workshops, 1-night presentations, or any other learning or community improvement projects which core group members decided to sponsor. In 1980 two of the six CLCs were continuing to function and two more operated on a more intermittant basis. Chapter one, which provides a step-by-step description of how the CLC was started, also discusses the organization of core groups and learning activities. The experiences, critical issues, and continuing dilemmas of the participant/facilitator are covered in chapter two. The last two chapters provide a discussion of the adoption of the CLC model in other communities and a commentary about the CLC model. (AH)

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LEARNING IN COMMUNITY:

An Empowerment Approach

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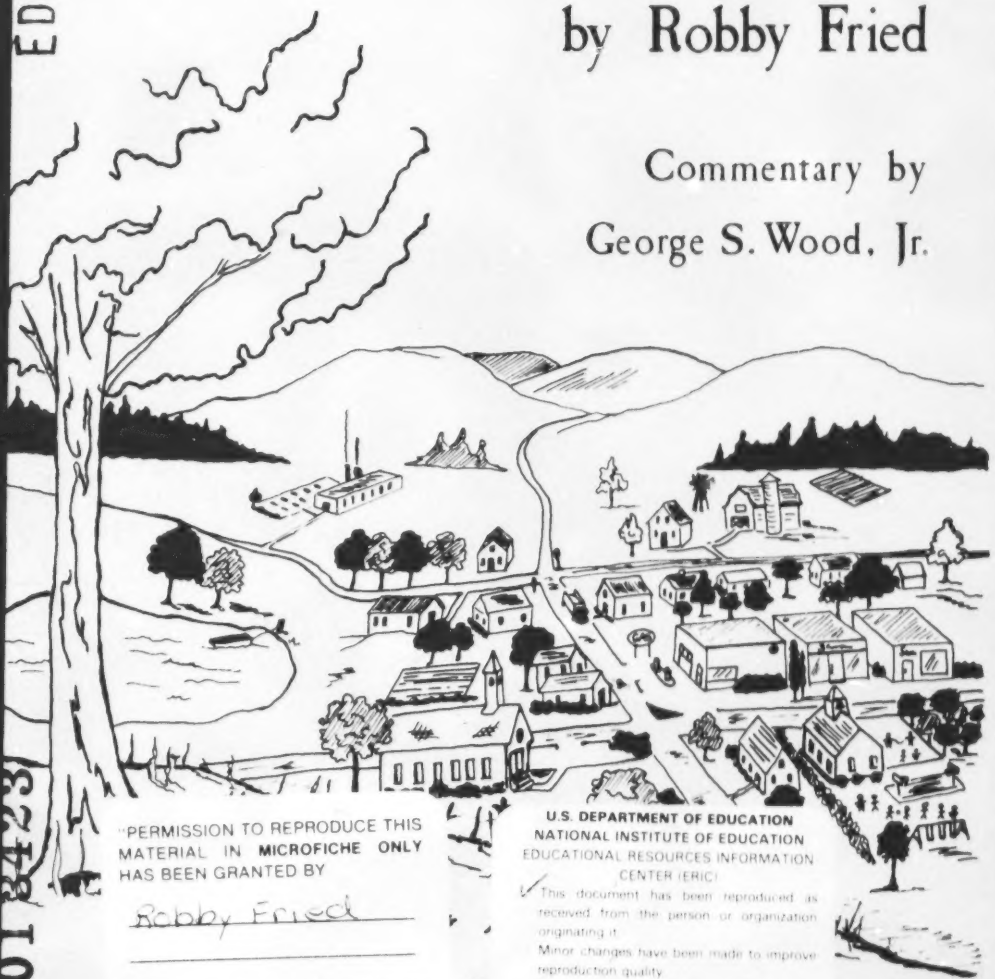
by Robby Fried

Commentary by
George S. Wood, Jr.



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LEARNING IN COMMUNITY:

An Empowerment Approach

by Robby Fried

With a Commentary on Issues by George S. Wood, Jr.

Community Education development from a non-school, learner-controlled base, generated in six New Hampshire towns by citizen "Core Groups."

Published by the Institute for Community Education Development, Ball State University, through a grant from the Community Education Office of the U.S. Department of Education

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Note to Readers

The author is continuing the development of the ideas contained herein and would appreciate communications from people who use the concepts and techniques so that their experiences and suggestions can be considered in the further development of the CLC model.

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To George Wood, whose questions provided the framework for Chapter Three and whose challenge to the Community Education movement comprises Chapter Four;

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To Hope Zanes for her photographs of our Core Group reunion, and to Georgette Boudreau for her cover drawing and graphic work.

Robby Fried

It was a whole different thing starting outside the school and growing up from the community . . . it meant people right from the town itself, and not people who were trained particularly in being teachers or in leadership roles.

JILL DZIECHOWSKI, RAYMOND, N.H.

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Overture

WORKING FROM THE GRASS ROOTS *UP!*

A Community Education Program usually begins top down: a principal, school board chairman, or superintendent becomes excited about the idea and "sells" it to those who control the public school and its resources. Teachers, other school staff, community leaders, and agencies are invited to "buy in". The public is surveyed. The school board votes its approval. Funding is secured. Someone is hired as director. An advisory council is appointed. Classes are organized. And another "Community School" opens its doors to the public.

Seven years ago, the Community Education process in New Hampshire started from the grass roots *up*.

In six small towns the public came together *first*—citizens who saw themselves potentially as both "learners" and "sharers of skills". Only if local residents decided that the community education concept *made sense* for their particular town, did the process go beyond that first meeting. And only when a group of would-be learners volunteered to *take charge* of the not-yet-created learning program, did the project go forward.

I was the agent of this process, supported by a federal grant and working out of a University-based continuing education unit. By design, the project had no formal connection to any public school authority. I left the question of institutional affiliation up to the learners. Where should a particular learning activity take place—in someone's home? in a church or library? in a town hall, school or recreation center? Most often, such questions led to another question: Where would learners feel most comfortable?

EMPOWERING THE LEARNERS

What to learn, where to learn, who might teach, what to call the program, were questions that formed the basis of the process of "learner empowerment".

Empowerment meant that local townspeople, as beneficiaries of the learning program, quickly became its "owners". And mastery of organizing skills became just as important a learning goal for those learners—and for the project—as the particular classes and activities which they were to offer to the town.

This grass roots approach to Community Education was called the "Community Learning Center (CLC) Project". In fact, no fixed "centers" were ever established. Instead a "Core Group" consisting of some 8 to 14 learners who agreed to be the organizers of the CLC in their town, became the "center". They met in one another's homes to plan and evaluate activities: crafts and recreation, home maintenance skills, cross-country skiing, a pre-school playgroup, a course on menopause, parent effectiveness, quilting and needlepoint, Town Meeting "issues" forums, etc. Skills which Core Group members learned while organizing these activities helped them initiate other projects not connected with CLC programs: a community health center, a town newspaper, and so on.

Of the six CLC's initiated in 1973-74, two are continuing to function, two operate on a more intermittent basis, one disbanded when most of the Core Group members moved away, and one integrated itself with existing town organizations. None has received any professional assistance for the past five years. During 1979, two new Core Groups were formed, in the towns of Franconia and Deerfield, N.H.

WHY READ THIS MONOGRAPH?

The Community Learning Center model is worth considering as an alternative approach to Community Education if:

1. No funding is available to pay anyone to teach in, or run, such a program.
2. You want to assist a small town or urban neighborhood to develop a Community Education effort that's tailor made for that particular community.
3. You've discovered that local school officials:
   a) don't want anybody besides kids and teachers to use the schools; or
   b) think life-long learning is someone else's business; or
   c) are threatened by the prospect of parents and other citizens involving themselves in educational decision-making; or
   d) are facing a budget crisis and refuse to consider new programs.
4. Support for life-long learning has come from local clergy, fraternal or civic groups, town officials, recreation people, human services agencies, besides the schools, and you want to allow the learners themselves to decide with whom to affiliate.
5. You want to help local citizens to develop leadership skills for community self-betterment (not just "enrichment").
6. You believe adult learners should exercise *control* (not just "advisory involvement") within learning programs designed on their behalf.

FORGET ABOUT THIS MONOGRAPH IF:

1. You think only a professional Community Education practioner has the skills to run an effective program.
2. Your job permits you to work only with and through local school officials in developing life-long learning.
3. You are convinced that programs run by volunteers never last.
4. You don't think "ordinary citizens" can assume leadership roles in educational efforts.
5. You don't want to be a facilitator in a Community Education effort to be run by local citizens.

USE THIS MONOGRAPH:

1. To replicate or adapt the CLC model in a community (especially a small town, or self-defined urban neighborhood).
2. To learn to be a "Participant/Facilitator" in a variety of educational settings, projects, or responsibilities.
3. To help you examine your philosophy and/or actions toward helping people take responsibility for solving their *own* problems.

EXAMPLE: Citizen Advisory Council. Everyone's telling you that "citizen involvement" is a key to a good Community Education program. You've helped set up a "Citizen's Advisory Council", but nothing works the way it's supposed to, and before long the council seems all but dead: attendance is spotty; one or two individuals dominate the meetings; people seem to get hung-up on small matters while avoiding more important issues; the council acts as a "rubber stamp" to whatever the local administrator decides, or goes off on its own tangent while ignoring the priorities set by the needs assessment; or all of the above. Whatever the cause, by now the advisory council—and maybe even the whole idea of citizen involvement—seems like a big waste of time, a nice idea in theory that doesn't work in practice.

What can the CLC Project offer? The "Participant/Facilitator" role (Chapter II) might help you explore, 1) what your expectations were for this Advisory Council, 2) what conflicting messages council members are receiving about their role, and 3) what crucial risks you must be willing to take if you truly want the Council to share in responsibility for decision-making.

ADOPTING VS. ADAPTING THE MODEL

I developed the CLC Project at a time when I had no particular stake in public school reform (or much idea of how Community Education could contribute to such reform). Three years ago I moved from the University of New Hampshire to the N.H. State Department of Education as Community Education director, so public schools are now my principal focus of activity. I want to explore how the notion of "empowerment" can be translated to other school/community contexts, and how the best aspects of the CLC project can contribute to improving the partnership between school, home and community.

Of the three main themes in Community Education, namely, life-long learning, community self-betterment and community involvement in the K-12 curriculum, the CLC Project dealt only with the first two. So there may be a question as to whether this approach can be used by those seeking to reform K-12 education. I feel quite strongly that while the techniques employed in the CLC Project do not relate directly to K-12 reform, the concept of "empowerment" and citizen "ownership", as well as the role of the facilitator, can contribute to such reform.

So the usefulness of this monograph, for me, involves adapting it to my current job responsibilities.

WHO MIGHT WANT TO ADAPT THE CLC APPROACH?

State coordinators of Community Education, Adult Education, Title I, Right-to-Read, or others concerned with community responsiveness, who seek to enhance parental and community involvement in education.

*Local Education Agency administrators (school superintendents, principals, school board members), who want to see life-long learning happen in a variety of community settings.

*Community School practitioners for whom "citizen participation" is more than a slogan, and those who recognize that many people don't feel comfortable doing their learning inside school buildings.

*Human Services Agency personnel who are more interested in helping people to help themselves than in perpetuating the dependence of their clients on professional services.

WHAT THE CLC HAS MEANT TO ME

Developing Community Learning Centers in six New Hampshire small towns changed my life, both philosphically and professionally. Although my experiment drew much from my prior experiences—rural community development work in the Peace Corps; an experimental "student-centered" undergraduate program at the University of New Hampshire; a doctoral program at Harvard which focused on studies of small communities—I was really almost totally unprepared for going out to small Yankee towns and "doing it".

I had few of the weapons or enticements which we educators usually rely on: I had no official sanction from anybody in power in the local school district; I had no money to give out; I had a completely untried idea that violated almost everybody's notion of how "educational programs" got set up; I had no "target population" of people with diagnosed educational deficiencies, or "captive audience" of people seeking credits or certification. I had, in short, not much clout or credibility, and so was forced to rely on the townspeople themselves: on their wisdom, their practical sense of what was appropriate, their hospitality and warmth, and, not least of all, their idealism.

I soon discovered that while educators and other human services professionals may have more technical *knowledge* than lay persons, we hold no advantage in terms of sensitivity, or common sense, or personal commitment to making life better in the communities where we live.

I was reluctant, I remember, when I joined the core group. I was dragged along by a friend. "I don't need this," I remember thinking. But I liked the concept, I liked the whole idea. So I kind of stuck it out. I could see new things could happen, and that's why I hung on there and stayed with the group.

PHYLLIS STREETER, KINGSTON, N.H.

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Chapter One

THE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER MODEL

Let's start with some definitions:

THE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER (CLC) brings informal programs of life-long learning to small towns and neighborhoods which might not otherwise be able to offer community learning programs to their citizens.

From July, 1973 through June, 1975 in six New Hampshire towns, the CLC Project was sponsored by the University System of New Hampshire and received funds from the Fund for Improvement of Post-Secondary Education of the U.S. Office of Education. The aim was to develop both a *model* and a *process* through which groups of citizens, called "Core Groups," would acquire skills necessary to organize informal, non-credit, tuition-free learning activities, taught by volunteers from the community.

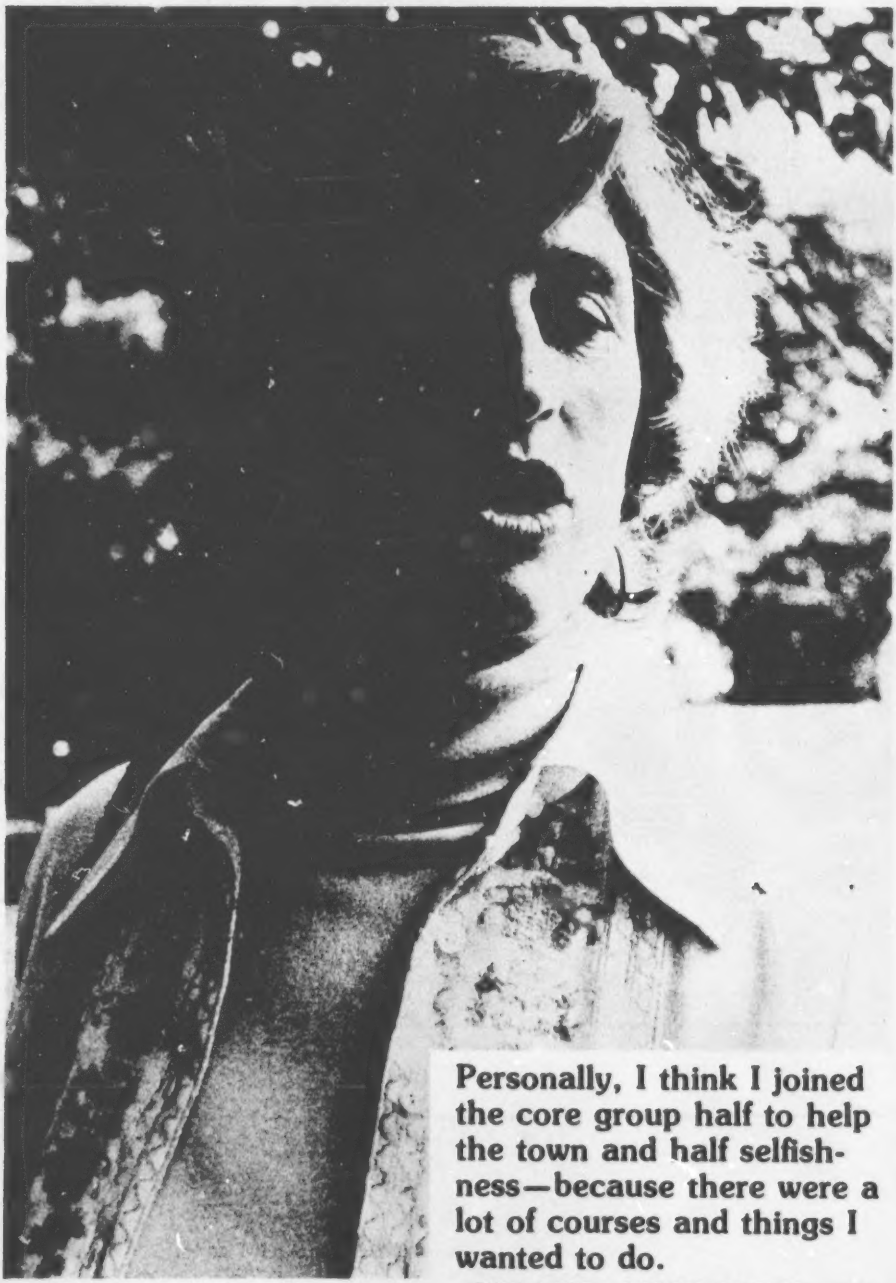
In New Hampshire, the learning activities include classes, clubs, town improvement efforts, recreational pursuits, workshops, one-night presentations, or any other learning or community improvement projects which core group members decide to sponsor.

THE CORE GROUP is the basis of CLC organization in each participating community. Comprised of eight to fourteen people who themselves are potential learners and instructors, the core group decides what the CLC is to be within their town: what name to give the project, who will organize what learning activities, where they will take place, and so forth.

In a real sense, the Core Group IS the CLC. In Kingston, NH hardly anyone knew what the "Community Learning Center" was, but most people had heard about "Project LEARN" (which stands for *L*earning *E*xperiences *A*vailable *R*ight *N*ow!) by reading a weekly column in *The Kingstonian*. Rollinsford, NH citizens were aware of the "Rollinsford Learning Group" and people in the Bristol-Newfound Lake region found out about the "Newfound Interests Group" through flyers, posters, and newspapers stories.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES are what Core Groups organize in their communities. They are called "classes," "clubs," "groups," but usually the posters speak of the activity itself: "Stretch Your Dollar," "Quilting and Sharing," "Ski Touring." Learning activities usually take place in the homes of the instructor or one of the learners. Other town facilities are also used: church basements, schoolrooms, recreation centers, Legion halls. None of the six New Hampshire core groups has needed to own or rent its own building.

The choice of activities sponsored by the Core Group usually depends on several factors: 1) how long the Core Group has been working together and how much experience it has accumulated; 2) who's in the Core Group and what they want to learn or teach; 3) local resource persons identified by Core Group members; 4) specific requests from learners or other townspeople; and sometimes, 5) activities which Core Group members think might benefit others in town—for example, seminars on town goverment, recycling projects, programs for teenagers.



Personally, I think I joined the core group half to help the town and half selfishness—because there were a lot of courses and things I wanted to do.

GAIL HEIL, CONTOOCOOK, N.H.

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CLC Learning Activities: 1974-75

ROLLINSFORD COMMUNITY LEARNING GROUP: Knitting For Beginners; Wood Refinishing (2); Town Government Seminar Series (2); Fly Tying; Meat Cutting, Preparation and Cooking; Babysitting and Child Care; Bicycle Touring; Chair Caning; House and Property Protection (2); Crocheting; Quilting; First Aid; Everything About Taxes; Landscape; Community Gardening; Baby-Sitting Co-op; Tool Pool; Children's Playgroup; Women's Exercise Class; Boys Basketball League.

PROJECT LEARN (KINGSTON) How to Evaluate Your Meat Buying; Arts Interests Group (3); Outing Group; Hooked on Crocheting (2); Home Gardening; Home Protection; Pruning (2); Canning and Freezing; Health and Safety In The Home; Transactional Analysis (2); Ham Radio Operation; Stretch-Your-Dollar-Group; Basic Astrology (2); Home Insulation; Beginning Ceramics; International Cooking; Poetry For Pleasure; Off-The-Loom Weaving; Rug Braiding; Organic Gardening; Ski Touring; Quilting and Sharing; Breadmaking, Town Meeting Preview; Bicycle Outings.

LEARNING CENTER OF HOPKINTON/CONTOOCOOK: Pewter Etching (3); Stocks and Bonds; First Aid and Home Safety; Local Archeology; Swimming for Non-Swimmers; Grave Rubbing (2); Fundamentals of Photography; Auto Mechanics; Welding; Mixed Media Art; Painting; Bridge for Beginners; Wild Flower Drying; Golf; Home Gardening.

RAYMOND COMMUNITY LEARNING GROUP: Quilting Group (2); Auto Mechanics (2); Beginning Plumbing; Embroidery; Crewel and Needlepoint (2); History of Raymond Through Antiques; Needlecraft (2); Cake Decorating; Art Class; Women's Physical Fitness (2); Rug Hooking; Ceramics; Guitar Playing; Chess Anyone?; Film Club; Women's Awareness Group; Bicycle Workshop; Holiday Ideas Workshop; Dramatics Group; Gardening; Drug Education.

NEWFOUND INTERESTS GROUP (BRISTOL): Beginning Sewing; Bird Study; Fly Tying; Crewel and Beginning Embroidery; Crocheting; Pottery; Flower Arranging; Antiques; Quilting; Rug Braiding; Handy-Around-The-House; Leathercraft (2); Human Potential Seminar (2); Banking and Personal Finance; Town Government Seminar; Wildflower Program.

LEARNERS UNLIMITED (PITTSFIELD): Beginning Typing (2); Parent Effectiveness Training; Women's Discovery Group; Community Recycling.

PORTRAIT OF A CORE GROUP MEMBER

At the first core group meeting, she hardly spoke. When it was her turn to respond to my general question: "Well, how does the project sound to you? Is it something that makes sense for Hopkinton/Contoocook? Are there any other things about learning you'd like to talk about?" she said, "I think I'll just listen for a while, thank you."

At the second meeting, I was quite surprised that she showed up at all. She was surprised that I remembered her name, Lucille, a woman in her thirties with a very friendly face.

I don't think she talked much more at this meeting, either, but I noticed that when someone said something she thought was funny, Lucille laughed in a full-bodied, unreserved voice.

At the beginning of the third meeting, I said to her, "I'm glad you're here. I really wasn't sure, at that first meeting over in Hopkinton, that you were interested."

She said, "I was honestly so confused about what in the world was going on that I said to myself afterwards, 'You've just got to go back and see what it's all about.' And it was easier, too, because the second meeting was at Sue's house and I know her from school." Sue is a schoolteacher.

"What grade do you teach?"

"I'm the school secretary," she answered.

As the meeting progressed, an issue came up over lack of representation in the core group by other than the young couple, newcomers to the area, who were already involved. Some names were mentioned, of people who had lived in town for a good number of years, or who were tradespeople without a lot of formal education, or who were from other than the middle class sections of town. It was then that Lucille spoke up, immediately for one person's name was mentioned as a possible recruit.

"Oh, I'm not sure he'd be so good to invite. There are people who don't trust him, you know, because of some of his business dealings."

The others accepted her view.

As the meetings continued, Lucille's familiarity with the town and her good sense and warm personality seemed to make people respond to her with increasing respect. And she, in turn, participated fully. That summer, she hosted a core group meeting in her home, and when things got going again in the fall, she was an active member and continued to speak freely about her ideas. She also continued to participate in learning activities sponsored by the group.

Lucille wasn't there when I arrived at one core group meeting that October. I asked if she was coming and was told that she'd be late. It seemed that at a previous meeting which I had not attended, the group decided that it would be good to hold some of their learning activities at the school, during the evening when the rooms weren't being used. Someone had to take the matter up with the School Board, to get their permission and to work out details about care of the building and what to do about any extra costs for utilities or janitorial services.

Lucille had been chosen, or had volunteered, to do the negotiating. Everyone had felt that she could best represent the core group in dealing with the School Board, since she knew the town best and got along with most everybody.

The meeting was about a half hour old when Lucille arrived. She very calmly announced that everything had been worked out.

As **COORDINATOR** of the CLC Project during the period of federal funding, I was responsible for project site selection, recruitment, training, and assistance to core group members as well as developing and expanding contacts between the CLC Project and other efforts for community education and community development in New Hampshire.

I saw myself as a *participant/facilitator* in each of the core groups which I helped to organize, rather than as "leader": or "neutral observer." My primary objective was always to *empower* citizens, within the environment of the core group, to create and sustain an organization providing learning and self-help activities for their community.

My role was to encourage the core group to initiate and evaluate learning activities. I was more often asking "What do you think ought to be done?" than telling. I tried to remember that they, as people living in their town, had more expertise than I did in understanding the social climate in which all community-based activities take place. When I felt it appropriate to offer a suggestion, such as when asked directly or when the group had been working with an issue past the point of frustration, I tried to think of some solution another core group had found to that issue. That way, I found, the group could more easily accept or reject the suggestion on its merits, rather than as my advice.

I tried to be helpful to the *process* of decision-making, to nurture the group members' collective ability to assume *ownership* of the learning program. Instead of worrying about being too "directive" or too "passive" in core group meetings, I tried to modulate the level of my participation so that the group would emerge from a meeting feeling stronger in its ability to direct the process and accomplish necessary tasks. This meant taking myself out of the center of the group's attention; not doing more than my share of the talking; not intervening at a point of group frustration, but rather, by verbal and non-verbal support, encouraging the group to struggle constructively over issues of membership, course selection, or program policy. One example of a core group's "struggle" involved how to attract people to their programs. Often, the help I could offer was small compared with what other townspeople knew.

SHARON'S MAGIC TOUCH

The Raymond group was discouraged because they had tried very hard to think of activities that others in town would be interested in that Summer: a dramatics program for youngsters, a home baking class, back-packing, chess for beginners. Only the embroidery class which Caroline Severance had led in her home on Wednesday afternoons had been popular. But that always happened with Caroline's classes. The feeling of frustration was heavy in the room.

Also in the room that evening was Sharon, a young woman born and raised in Raymond. The group had invited Sharon to join them because it was she who had organized the most popular activity during the previous Spring. Sharon knew of a local woman who was expert in leading exercise programs for women, and by the time the class was about to begin, Sharon had recruited forty-five women to join her. They had met, in the school gym, for ten weeks.

"Well, we might as well ask her," said someone in the group. "How come your Women's Physical Fitness class was such a hit, while so many others flopped?"

Sharon shrugged her shoulders, but then spoke right up. "You know," she began, "I've been around Raymond for a long time, long enough to know that people don't come out for a thing just

because it's a good idea. There's lots of things that are worthwhile that never get off the ground."

"You don't have to tell us that," someone remarked. "What made it work for you?"

"Yeah, what's your technique?"

"There isn't any," Sharon replied. "I just found something I really wanted to do, you know—exercise and sports—and I told other people about it."

"But that's what we're asking—what did you tell people that made them want to come?"

"I told them how great an idea I thought it was." She paused a moment. "And, of course, I told them that I was going to be in it, too."

"And that was all?"

"That's all. Everybody I called knew there'd be someone they knew at the class, namely, me. I guess they could also tell by the way I talked about the class that I was pretty enthused. And so it just caught on."

The rest of us looked at one another, and felt a bit foolish. It was obviously much too simple an answer. Yet it was also obviously true. People do want to know that someone cares enough about a thing to get into it themselves. And they want to know there will be at least one friendly face to meet them when they come, especially if it's something they've never tried before—like an adult learning class in their town.

WHERE THE CLC IDEA CAME FROM

For me, the CLC Project brought together two important ideas: 1) the creation of learning programs controlled by the learners themselves, and 2) helping small towns develop more of a 'sense of community' among residents of different interests and backgrounds.

Experiences in the New York City Welfare Department, the Peace Corps in Africa, and the University of New Hampshire had convinced me that programs to help individuals or communities to "develop" tend more often to reflect the needs of professionals than those of folks at the receiving end.

I had had my fill of battling one kind of bureaucracy or another—on behalf of welfare clients, or Senegalese villagers, or undergraduate students. I had struggled, with varying degrees of success, to promote the idea that people ought to be encouraged to educate and develop themselves, rather than to become perpetual (and progressively more passive) recipients of professional services.

Looking around me, at small New Hampshire towns, I perceived that the only education "territory" yet unclaimed covered informal, non-credit, institutionally-unaffiliated learning activities for adults. There were, to be sure, Cooperative Extension programs, high school evening courses, University "outreach" efforts, but these existed mostly in the larger towns and/or involved someone in authority setting up a list of courses for others to choose from.

KEEPING IT AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL

My desire to promote both life-long learning and community self-betterment led me to avoid tying the CLC concept to the local public school system and, in general, to stay clear of institutions and other professionals. I would suggest that people get together in someone's home, rather than in a school building, to underscore the notion that community learning activities exist where people *live* not just where educators work).

Another consideration for me was that

formal education seemed much less concerned with the quality of community life than with the advancement of the individual. "Success," in school terms, means leaving town—to college or career. Staying around, finding a job in a local store or factory, getting married and having a family—these are the options for kids who don't do well in school: the drop-outs, the left-behinds. School means individuality, competition. To collaborate in school is to risk being accused of "cheating." The collaborative impulse atrophies.

EDUCATION IN CONFLICT WITH COMMUNITY

A result of public education's lack of active concern for community is that those who "succeed" and leave town for more education settle eventually in another community no better equipped to participate in community affairs than if they had not gone anywhere; and those who stay, to pay the taxes and send their kids to school, suffer from the stigma of being educational "failures" and from a lack of training in group problem-solving or collaborative skills.

In short, I operated under the assumption that public schooling—from kindergarten through graduate school—generally ignores community enhancement values in favor of curricula which stress individuality, mobility, competitiveness. And since the CLC project explicitly saw as its goal (as stated on the proposal's cover page): "the creation of community-based educational settings in which citizens can *at the same time* achieve individual learning goals and experience participatory and collaborative roles in organizing and developing their own educational opportunities . . ." leading towards "education for the enhancement of the quality of life within small communities", it made sense to find some place besides the local school to get the CLC started.

Some other ways in which this 'sense of community' focus was incorporated into the CLC Project:

CHOOSING SMALL TOWNS

•I chose to work in New Hampshire towns of 1,500-3,000 people (a fairly arbitrary figure, arrived at because I felt that a much smaller town might have enough informal, unorganized learning possibilities so that the CLC would be redundant; whereas a larger town would likely have an organized adult "enrichment" program which might resent the competition). I was also hoping that in these small towns, people of different social classes and life-styles might be more likely to know each other and to interact comfortably, thus minimizing the all-too-real possibility of the CLC being captured by one social faction or another.

•I encouraged core groups to use the talents of local citizens in building their programs of informal learning activities. With all the current emphasis on degrees and credentials, I hoped to reaffirm the value of small community life by showing the townspeople that skilled resource people-willing to share what they knew—were abundant in their neighborhood.

•To contribute to self-sufficiency within the core group, I designed the proposal to provide no outside funding: no money to pay instructors, or to hire administrators, or to rent offices. Aside from my services as facilitator (provided free to participating communities), all resources necessary for project implementation had to come from the community itself.

•The lack of outside funding prompted core groups, in turn, to run their programs on a voluntary basis, giving support to the notion that "learning in community" can happen informally among neighbors and fellow townspeople, without the buying and selling of knowledge.

HOW CLC GOT STARTED—IN A TYPICAL SMALL COMMUNITY

Step 1: I chose a representative list of about 25 towns with populations of 1,500-3,000 and asked people I knew with state-

wide connections through Jaycees, Council of Churches, Community Action, Cooperative Extension, Public Libraries, Head Start, etc. to suggest contact people in those 25 towns.

Step 2: Picking a town with several contact persons on my list, I would telephone until I found someone who was home. I briefly described the project, and asked if they were at all interested. If they said "no," or "too busy right now, thanks," I thanked them and moved on down the list. If they showed some interest, I sent them a two-page brief on the CLC project and arranged to call back later when they had read it. My objective, at this stage, was to find someone willing to host an initial meeting in their home (or in some other facility in which they felt comfortable). Only when I found a host, could I move to the next step.

Step 3: When a host had volunteered (usually a young couple or a clergy person), the crucial stage of selecting the invitees began. Instead of trying to do this over the phone, I would visit the town, tour the community, and sit down with the host to create a list. I would emphasize that it was more important to invite a *representative* group of townspeople than to select only those most likely to respond positively to the CLC idea. I suggested categories like: a) people who had lived in the town most of their lives; b) newcomers who showed some interest in town affairs (or who would welcome an opportunity to be included); c) people who belonged to each of the churches in town; d) a downtown businessman; e) a local factory worker, f) a teacher or school secretary; g) an older citizen; h) a teenager; i) a Grange member; j) someone with Cooperative Extension experience; k) low income people; l) roughly equivalent numbers of men and women; m) representation from people of various ages. I would stress that each person to be invited should be of friendly disposition and the kind of person who could work well with others.

Step 4: I would then ask the host to contact each person on the list in person or by phone, so that the invitation would come first from a fellow resident. I would follow up by sending a short letter on project stationery explaining the purpose of my visit and my anticipation of meeting them at the host's house (or wherever the host wished the meeting to take place).

Step 5: On the night of the first meeting, I would arrive about a half hour early to help the host get ready and to set up the video-tape equipment. (To help explain the project to local and university audiences, I had video-taped some of the early meetings. An edited tape proved invaluable in allowing townspeople to see and hear the project described by people who looked like them, who had New Hampshire accents like theirs, and who expressed some of the same doubts that were running through their own heads. This tape has been used extensively in training sessions for would-be facilitators at agencies and colleges.)

Step 6: Once the guests arrived, the host would welcome everyone and introduce me. Until I had the edited video-tape for use in these initial meetings, I would begin by describing the project as simply as possible:

> ***I'm sure there are lots of ways that people in this town learn on their own at home, with their families, in extension groups, evening courses, church groups, civic groups, etc. What this project could accomplish is to create some more informal opportunities for people to exchange skills and interests with each other. People of different ages and life-styles may have a lot to share with each other and no way of doing that now. What makes this project different from other organized learning programs is that here the learners—people like you—will be making all the decisions. You are,***

after all, the experts in what kind of learning you want to pursue, where and when that learning should take place, what kind of instructor you would feel most comfortable with, and so on.

*The idea behind the project is both that individual townspeople can learn what they want to learn, **and** that the learning activities can benefit the town as a whole: bringing people together, connecting learners of different ages, perhaps even helping to solve some problems that the community is facing.*

Tonight is the first meeting, here in _____ville, to see whether or not this kind of project makes sense for this town. You've been invited because your host thought you were a good person to help consider that question. After we find out some more about how you feel about learning opportunities here in this community, I'm going to ask you all to make a decision. If you decide that _____ville already has enough learning activities and programs to respond to the folks who want to learn, that's fine. There's nothing about this project that makes it necessary to have it start up in any given town. Some towns want it, some don't. That's what we're here to decide tonight.

Step 7: Rather than open the discussion at this point, I would do something quite mechanical; I would say: "It's very important for me to hear from each of you on the question of how you feel about this idea. So I'm going to go around the room, starting with you, on my left. That will put you on the spot (pointing to the person sitting next to me), but it will give the next person a few minutes to think of something to say. Then, turning to the person on my left, I would ask: "Is there something about this idea that appeals to you? or that sounds like a waste of time? Is there something you would particularly like to learn from somebody else in town? Or something you think other folks might want to learn from you?"

This technique allows each person some time to decide what to say and avoids turning the meeting over to the most assertive or most verbal participants.

Step 8: If finding a representative group for townspeople to attend this first meeting is the first crucial step, then how the facilitator handles this initial round of citizen comments is the second crucial one. In any "new" situation like this, people seek reinforcement of their ability to make a positive contribution to the process of the group. They want to have someone (hopefully the facilitator *and* one or more fellow citizens) acknowledge the worth of the idea, suggestion, question, or comment, that they might make in the course of answering any of the questions the facilitator has posed.

Such reinforcement—and it must be genuine, not hokey—is crucial. Educational or social action groups are often torpedoed by an over-ambitious leader hell-bent on moving his or her idea forward, who brushes past anyone expressing doubt or uncertainty, or who is obviously patronizing to such people, and who—by his or her treatment of them—gives everybody in the room the unspoken message: "Stay on the track—or the hell with you." New Hampshire townspeople respect themselves too much to appreciate that kind of message, even if it's not directed at themselves personally. They're likely to wonder—"Will it be *me* who gets put down next?"

I would try to respond positively to each speaker. To someone who asked: "Isn't there enough going on in town for the people who really want to do something? The rest just don't seem to care," I might say: "That's part of what we want to find out tonight. It's nice to hear that this town does have a lot of learning opportunities. Do you feel that they

are accessible to everyone?"

Usually, after three or four people have spoken, the townspeople begin reinforcing one another's comments. For example, if the second speaker indicates an interest in learning how to make a quilt, it is likely that someone else in the room knows a relative or neighbor who might like to teach quilting.

Hopefully, too, some participants have begun to comment on the community itself: the problem of teenagers who have no place to go; elderly people living alone with few contacts in town; the need for a recycling effort; a desire to create some nature trails in a piece of woods that has been donated to the town. The first time something like this is mentioned, I take particular care to reinforce it: "I'm really glad you've suggested the thing about teenagers as something we should consider. To me, learning involves more than just taking courses. In some of the towns I've been visiting in this project, people like yourselves are thinking and planning about ways of making their community a better place to live."

Step 9: This discussion, inclusive of everyone in the room, normally took anywhere from forty-five minutes to an hour and a half, and was a first experience in how the CLC project would function. Around nine o'clock, I would remind people that they *did* have a decision to make about whether or not to go forward with the project. That reminder would likely spark some questions about the project itself—who would run it, what my role would be, etc. I always preferred to allow people to talk about their or the community's learning interests *first* (i.e. Step 8); keeping my references to the project strictly low-key. That way, the focus for the first hour or so was on the learner's experiences, interests, perspectives, rather than on the CLC project—an important element in an 'empowering' approach to community education.

When it *was* time for me to focus on the decision to be made, people in the room had already contributed to one another's understanding, and even helped someone find a learning resource in some area (like quilting) of interest to that person. When asked who would actually *run* the CLC, I could point to the discussion which had just taken place as proof that the people in the room were perfectly capable of guiding the project, should they decide tonight to have a CLC.

I would next mention the concept of a "Core Group," and that for core group members, the organizing task would be an important part of their learning. My role, I would explain, would be similar to the one I had played this evening—to help structure a discussion in which core group members could come to some decisions about helping the project succeed. I needed a core group, I would explain, because I needed to count on the fact that several people had made a commitment to making the project happen.

After a few more questions, I would insist that we take a vote. (I had found that anxiety about making a decision sometimes prompted question after question).

Step 10: If the vote was positive, I would begin to form the core group. Unless the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the project (more than two-third), I would offer people yet another opportunity to briefly discuss the pros and cons. Normally, if fifteen or so people had attended this meeting, four or five would volunteer to form the nucleus of the core group. I would meet with them for a few minutes after the meeting was officially over and plan the date, time, and place for the next meeting. I would invite everyone else to come, regardless of whether or not they were in the core group, explaining that I needed to *count on* the core group to be there, but others were welcome too. I would ask the core group members to bring along others whom they thought might be willing to join the core group, especially people who represented different age groups, sections of town, etc. from those who had volunteered that evening. And so the first and most important meeting would end.

Some things had *not* happened: nobody was elected president or secretary-treasurer of

The core group gave us oldtimers in town a chance to get acquainted with people in a new development in town.

As a result of the publicity he got by being in the core group, one of the newcomers became elected to a town office two years after he had been in town, which is very unusual.

FRED GREEN, ROLLINSFORD

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the core group. No "official minutes" had been recorded, no by-laws drafted, or dues collected. Nor would any of these things happen in the meetings which followed. I didn't forbid this—I just never suggested it, and I found that, by and large, the townspeople felt relieved and relaxed to be part of an organization that seemed as informal as a cup of coffee in a neighbor's kitchen—and yet which got the tasks accomplished just the same.

A typical Core Group meeting might run like this:

SETTING THINGS UP

I arrive at the home of whoever in the group is hosting this particular meeting at around 7:15 P.M. If we're video-taping that night, Mike Shields is with me and together we lug the equipment out of my car.

We enter the house to the smell of freshly-baked cookies or banana bread and coffee perking. We're greeted by the host couple or, more frequently, by a woman whose husband (not a core member) hasn't come home from work yet or is downstairs in the cellar working on some project of his own. Several kids are in various stages of getting ready for bed but are quite excited by the anticipation of people coming to their house. They peek shyly from around doorways for a while and then get a little bolder and venture out to examine the video equipment which Mike and I are setting up.

My host tells me she is expecting eleven people tonight, and that three others have let her know they can't make it. As 7:45 P.M. nears, the core members arrive: an elementary school teacher, a retired bookkeeper, a woman who runs a small antiques shop, a young couple newly arrived in the area who have a crafts business, a salesman, a local clergyman, a long-time resident of the town who's on the Conservation Commission, and two housewives who have young children at home. One of the housewives brings along a neighbor who's recently been widowed.

We greet each other on a first-name basis and make small talk while others drift in. Often this "small talk" consists of my remembering something the person I'm talking with said or did at a previous meeting which I was able to find useful at a core group meeting in another town—such as a suggestion to ask the local Volunteer Firemen to sponsor a first aid class.

By now it's pushing 8:00 and the kids are sent off to bed. Informal conversations, which have been going on in the kitchen or hallway, are brought into the livingroom. People make jokes about the bright lights which have been set up for the video camera, which gives me an excuse to explain to anyone new in the core group that we use edited video-tapes to let people in one community know how other core groups are working.

BUILDING AN AGENDA

Someone, usually not me, says "Let's get started, okay?" and people find chairs. The group has met some five or six times since getting formed, so people know each other, but the newcomer is introduced, and I ask her permission to video-tape the meeting before we actually get underway.

Setting an informal "agenda" is next—a quick round-the-room survey of what people want to accomplish tonight. I may begin by asking, "What needs to get talked about, or decided, so that when you leave, you'll go home thinking, 'That was a worthwhile meeting.'?" Setting the agenda also gives everyone a chance to speak, if only to reinforce someone else's goal for the meeting.

Usually, people want to talk about how well the learning activities now underway are doing; what problems people are encountering in finding a

teacher, or enough learners, or a place to meet; what activities they'd like to see the core group sponsor next month; or how to get better publicity. Less frequently, someone will mention an organizational need within the group itself, such as getting more men involved, or a special opportunity in the community that the group might want to respond to, such as a school fair, or a newly-formed youth club that needs help in planning programs. My own agenda items range from announcing a workshop for core groups from around the state, to introducing the idea of preparing a simple survey which the group could send out to all those in town who have so far participated in learning activities.

DOING BUSINESS

Most of these items are then discussed by the group during the next hour, beginning with informal reports on how current activities are going. It seems that no one has shown up for the class on "Breadmaking," even though several people had said they were coming. The teacher, a rather shy young woman (not a core group member), is understandably upset. But in the physical fitness group, forty-five people showed up and the church basement only holds twenty-five, so the group has to decide whether to limit enrollment or see if they can use the school gym.

It is now about 9:30. Most of the easily resolved agenda items have been discussed, and various people have volunteered to pursue such matters as contacting a retired woman to see if she will teach a quilting course, finding out if the county extension office will help with a local gardening effort, and trying to get more free publicity in an area newspaper. People are now talking about a more complex issue that has resisted being easily resolved. The issue may deal with the relatively small number of factory workers who have taken advantage of core group-sponsored activities; or the fact that a prospective teacher for a leathercraft class (who earns his living from such work) can only teach if he is paid something for his time; or how to negotiate with the local school board over use of the home economics room and gymnasium for some of the activities; or whether or not to charge 75¢ registration fee to cover incidental core group expenses.

REACHING CONSENSUS

One, or none, or several solutions to the issue have already been discussed, but since core groups tend to operate on the basis of individual and voluntary initiative (such as negotiating on behalf of the group with some prospective resource person in the community), or by group consensus (rather than voting), after a half hour of further discussion, nothing has been decided.

At such a time (now closer to 10:00 P.M.), I begin to feel that all views, including my own, have been expressed and that the group is stalling for lack of an apparent consensus. So I use my own desire to begin the drive home as a reason to call for a decision.

(Sometimes I count the number of people who have yawned in the past five minutes, announce that figure publicly, and declare that the time for deciding is at hand, feeling confident, however, that anyone with something new or urgent to contribute will feel free to keep the discussion going). In any event, after ten minutes of further discussion, a consensus is reached, the video lights are turned off to cool before dismantling, and the more formal part of the meeting ends.

SOCIAL TIME

There is still time, however, for more

For me, being a part of the core group was kind of letting loose a lot of things that I had in my mind. It gave me an excuse for me to do what I liked to do, which was to organize the community and to develop my own leadership skills.

REBECCA TOWLE, ALEXANDRIA

To me one of the spinoffs of a community group like this is developing leaders who can go and do other kinds of things in the community.

JUDY BUSH, DEERFIELD

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coffee or banana cake, and for informal mingling among the core members, who exchange views on various town issues—budgets, taxes, school issues —or other matters of importance or amusement to them. I always enjoy this part of the meeting, since it gives me the feeling that the core group has become, for the participants, a place to get in touch with one another as citizens, as well as neighbors who are working together on a learning project.

A time and place has been set for the next meeting, but I have suggested that the group might want to meet without me next time. One or two people remark that they'd like to see me there, because "somehow, even though we are running this project ourselves, you help us get things done." I let them know that I'm pleased by their feelings about me, but then offer my view that the group seems to be strong enough and committed enough to pursue its work on its own. I see a few nods of agreement and then suggest that I attend the meeting after next, when the new group of learning activities will be underway. If anything comes up in the meantime that people want some help with, they can call me collect at the University.

At 10:20 or so, with the car packed with the video-tape equipment, Mike and I thank our host and take our leave. On the ride home we talk for a while about the meeting, mostly about changes we've seen in the ability of one or more core group members to take a leadership role. But after a while the conversation switched to Mike's farm, or state politics, or whatever.

WHAT HAVE CORE GROUPS PRODUCED: TWO VISIONS

There are lots of ways of assessing the impact of the CLC projects. I refused to emphasize "evaluation" at the expense of more important concerns. The way I look at it—so long as core groups continue to function as voluntary associations of community residents interested in organizing learning and community improvement activities—the "value" of CLC's is self-evident.

We did have an "official" evaluation of the CLC, and here's what it showed:

An informal survey of each core group's activities, compiled during February-March 1975 by Richard Harris for Stuart Langton & Associates, of Fremont, N.H., (evaluators of the CLC Project under the FIPSE grant) and covering the first year of CLC project activity, produced the following statistics regarding participation by townspeople:

- More than 750 individuals participated in core group-sponsored learning activities during the period February 1975—February 1975. Two-thirds of them enrolled in more than one activity during that year, so total enrollment in learning activities exceeded 1,300.
- 71% of the participants in these learning activities had attended no classes or learning activities during four years prior to their involvement in the activity or activities sponsored by the local core group.
- Of those community residents recruited by the core group to teach or lead these learning activities, 76% had never taught adults before in an organized setting.
- Average enrollment in a learning activity was 9. Average number of sessions for each activity was 4-5.
- 52% of learning activities involved both men and women as learners; 44% involved women only, 4% men only.
- 37% of learning activities included persons of mixed ages (under 20 to over 60), with most learners in the 20-40 range.
- 27% included persons with both working

class and middle class backgrounds. Of the total learners, 34% were from "blue-collar" families, 66% from "white-collar" families.

- 47% of the teacher/leaders joined the local core group, either before or after leading a learning activity.
- 19% of the teacher/leaders enrolled in other core group-sponsored learning activities as learners before leading their own activity; 28% became learners after teaching.

Another way of evaluating the CLC project might stress the quality of the impact, rather than the breadth:

PUTTING CORE GROUP LEARNING TO USE

Jill Dziechowski is a woman in her mid-twenties who moved to Raymond with her husband several years ago, after getting about halfway through college in Boston. Together, the two of them have operated a candle-making business in their house, selling their wares to shops and stores in New England and at crafts fairs. They both are struggling, with some success, to be economically self-sufficient and creative about their work. And they very much enjoy being in Raymond.

Jill, in particular, has become quite interested and involved in the town itself. She was an early and active member of the core group and through the group she has made new friends in the area, ranging from other young couples to Caroline Severance (who, in her sixties, and a long-time resident of Raymond, is of herself the heart of the core group).

Anyway, one evening a few years ago, Jill found herself sitting in a meeting of health care advocates from the area (the town doctor, nurses, public health agency people, other concerned citizens) who were discussing the desirability and feasibility of a community health care program for people in Raymond. The need, and the desirability, were evident, or so everyone at the meeting was saying. The big issue was feasibility. Jill told me about it, the day after the meeting.

"After we all agreed we wanted a community health program, the professional people started talking about a proposal, for a grant or something, to get the program started. I just sat there, feeling I didn't have anything to offer since I don't know much about grants, or about health programs, for that matter. But I noticed that as talk about the proposal dragged on, fewer and fewer people were talking, and the early enthusiasm of the meeting was fading.

"What bothered me," Jill continued, "was that here were all these people—highly-trained and motivated people, people who wanted to do something for the community—and yet they all seemed to feel that the matter was out of their hands. Those who were speaking were giving the impression that nothing could happen until a grant came through, or something like that.

"The whole scene reminded me of a core group meeting, when things are going slow and we're all bitching about something or other and avoiding the issue of what we can and want to do ourselves. And I know the only way to get out of that trap is to stop complaining and start planning whatever we really want to see happen.

"So finally, I raised my hand, and apologised for speaking about what I probably know nothing about, not being a doctor or anything. But then I said, 'It seems to me that there's a whole lot that can be accomplished with the

people we've got right here, in this room. I mean I've heard some really great suggestions made here this evening—about a town survey of what people really need and want in terms of health care, or about an examination and referral clinic that could meet once a week to let people know if they need serious medical attention, or other ideas that people have mentioned. It seems that with all the good energy and the skills of people here, we can get something *started while you're waiting to hear about that grant.'"*

"What happened then?" I asked.

"Oh, lots of people who had stopped contributing to the discussion, while all that talk about a proposal was going on, got into it again, and the meeting ended on a real high. People came up to me later and said they were glad about what I'd said. It's funny, because I know less about the subject than probably anyone else there. But if the core group has taught me anything, it's that we've got to look to our own energy to really make something happen."

Evaluations and assessments notwithstanding, empowerment is what the CLC Project was all about: not organizing core groups or expanding learning activities in several small New Hampshire towns. Core groups and their programs were the settings through which citizen empowerment was pursued, however imperfectly.

"Learning In Community," (the slogan of the CLC Project) was for me an initial focus in my search for pathways to empowerment. The encouragement of community residents in the creation of their own avenues, and in the development of their own resources, for envisioning, planning, deciding, organizing, participating and sharing as learners and instructors, plus reflecting, examining, and revisioning on perhaps a more complex level of community concerns—that is what the CLC model really fosters, really aims at.

I remember very distinctly about the fourth meeting in Hopkinton where everybody was getting frustrated because we were talking about it and talking about it, and nobody was really doing anything. I felt at the time that if I had said: "Well look folks, when are you going to get to it? You've talked about this for four sessions; I'm not going to come back anymore unless you get your act together;" then it would have been my role, or seen as my role to do that. Then the group would have depended on me to play the straight man, or the tough guy, or the sargeant-at-arms or whatever. But as you remember, it was Sue Adams who said: "We've been coming back here for 4 meetings; we just keep talking about it. We never do anything." And I was saying, to myself: "Terrific—glad I didn't have to say it!"

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Chapter Two

THE ROLE OF "PARTICIPANT/FACILITATOR" IN COMMUNITY LEARNING: EXPERIENCES, CRITICAL ISSUES, CONTINUING DILEMMAS.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

The name "participant/facilitator" is not an easy one to explain, or even pronounce. It's clumsy, sounds like jargon. It's nothing anyone ever wanted to be when they grew up. But, at the moment, "participant/facilitator" is the closest I can come as to who I was in fostering the development of Community Learning Centers.

There are other and more familiar-sounding names which approximate the role: "Community Educator," "Extension Agent," "Continuing Education Specialist," "Change Agent," or "Trainer." There is something of the participant/facilitator in each of those roles, but none is identical to it.

LEADER—MANIPULATOR—FACILIATOR

In towns and cities, people think of those who promote various activities as "community leaders." A leader, popularly speaking, is someone who knows what should be done, who rallies people to do it, and whom you can blame when things go wrong.

Part of me really wanted to be a leader. I got involved in the Community Learning Center Project in part because I thought I knew what was good for people. To that extent, I set myself up (inside my own head) as a "leader." I felt, and still feel, that it is good for people to:

1) exercise individual power in determining how to live their lives;

2) learn how society works, and become aware of their options;

3) get in touch with their own needs for acceptance, recognition, and self-fulfillment;

4) communicate those needs in non-manipulative ways to people around them;

5) connect to people unlike themselves in a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and enjoyment.

6) engage with groups of people to improve the quality for their lives, and take an active role in decision-making and task achievement;

7) help create a community environment in which people care for one another.

But I couldn't very well be a "leader" in the conventional sense (that is, someone who decides for other people what to do), when what I wanted was for *people* to exercise power, caringly and collaboratively, in fulfillment of their own needs and desires. People won't do *any* of the things I've listed above out of obedience to some leader. They will only do those things when *they* feel *capable* and *willing* to do so, and then they're acting upon their own impulses, and not responding to the directives or charisma of a leader.

So if one begins with strong beliefs about what people ought to do—*and these are things which people will only do when they feel willing and capable*—then getting them to that point involves something besides being a

"leader."

Some would-be leaders, faced with this apparent dilemma, become *manipulators*, instead. Leaders think they know what's good for people and tell them so, openly. Manipulators know what they want out of people but are afraid to disclose their intentions for fear that people won't agree. So manipulators pretend to have no personal agenda, yet they give people information calculated to steer them toward a particular action or decision, hoping that when the people act they'll think it was their own choosing.

But I felt that to be a manipulator would be to contradict almost all of my visions of what's good for people (namely, the exercise of their own power in personally meaningful and collaborative ways).

HOW EACH INFLUENCES DECISIONS

I chose, therefore, to see myself as a facilitator. In my view, a facilitator differs from a leader and from a manipulator chiefly in how he or she relates to the process by which people make decisions. A facilitator works with people to create an environment in which good decisions can be made by the group. A "good decision" is one which a group chooses through a democratic or consensual process after considering available options.

A facilitator is usually more concerned with *how* people go about deciding what to do, than *what* it is they are deciding. As such, the facilitator must have faith that the choices which people make, working within the environment he or she has helped create, will not only be the right choice for them (including making some mistakes along the way), but will also be choices which the facilitator, too, can accept. When a facilitator cannot accept such decisions, he or she must change roles (i.e. become a leader or a manipulator), or else withdraw (hopefully explaining to others why he or she has changed roles or quit the group).

Faced with a problem or a need within the community or organization in which they are working, the leader, the manipulator, and the facilitator respond differently:

- The leader analyzes the problem, decides (perhaps after conferring with advisors) what action to take, and then attempts to rally the community or organization to support the leader's chosen course of action.
- The manipulator analyzes the problem to find solutions other people will accept and especially which solution will work to his or her own advantage. The manipulator then attempts, often through covert or covertly coercive means, to influence others to respond in ways that will best serve his/her ends.
- The facilitator attempts to bring people together to *collectively* analyze the problem, assists them in reviewing various options, supports them in coming to a decision either by consensus or by vote, and then helps them both to implement their decision and to reflect upon the whole process.

Now, although the roles contrast in many respects, they are not, in practice, mutually exclusive. Leaders and facilitators become manipulators whenever they seek covertly to influence people, or to hide their own agendas behind a facade of concern for the public or organization as a whole. A manipulator will often temporarily choose the role of "facilitator" as a means of increasing his or her power over others. Then, when things are going just the way the manipulator wants them, he or she may "emerge" as leader.

The role of facilitator demanded, by definition, that I learn certain skills, much patience, and a faith in the choices that community residents would make in creating their programs.

HOPKINTON: STARTING SLOWLY

Eighteen or so people are sitting in the livingroom of Don Randall's eighteenth-century farmhouse in Hopkinton, N.H. It is late November,

1973, and this is the first time I have ever met with a group of townspeople to discuss the CLC Project. We have come, Maurice Olivier of the School of Continuing Studies, Mike Shields the videotape operator and I, lugging equipment and a few hand-outs, for a 7:30 p.m. meeting.

The meeting has been slow and somewhat awkward in getting started. After receiving permission to video-tape the meeting, we begin by saying something about what the CLC Project is, who's funding it, how it came about, how it fits with the "outreach" mission of the University, and so forth. Now we are asking the townspeople, in turn, to give their reactions to the idea.

Most people don't know quite what to say, although they try to sound encouraging. Other people ask the questions they brought along with them: "Is this like that program they tried to get started in the school a few years ago, the one that didn't go over because nobody responded to the announcement they sent home with the kids?" "Is this another one of those government programs that's s'posed to be for the poor people?" "What's the University getting out of this?"

One woman finds our answers evasive, and tries to pin us down. She asks if we are going to provide teachers to teach them the subjects they might want to learn. I say no. She asks if we are going to take people from Hopkinton who want to be able to teach some craft and train them so they can come back and teach it to others. I explain that that's not quite the purpose, either, but that I will assist local people who want to organize a teaching and learning program. The woman looks slightly annoyed.

"Well," she says, "if you're not going to train teachers; if all you're going to do is help us find the people who already know how to teach something, then I don't see the point. What would you be doing for us that we can't already do for ourselves?"

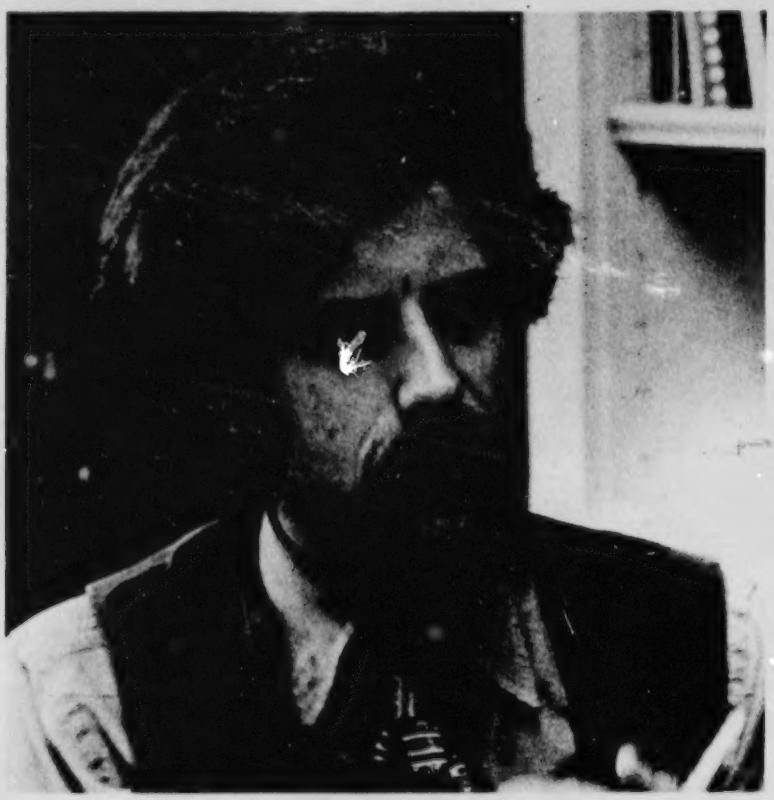
(That's the question! She's got it!") I say to myself. ("Now, I hope to hell we don't have to answer it.") I wait. This is definitely the moment. I've given them plenty of information. If they're ever going to start taking hold of this thing, it better happen now. Finally, a man from the other side of the room speaks.

"Maybe that's what we do need: a catalyst, or something." I look at him, and nod my head and smile to give him encouragment. He goes on, "Maybe that's what it'll take for the people in town to take adult education seriously, some help from the University—but not too much." He stops, but others take up this theme.

The meeting goes on for another hour or so. And there's still plenty of confusion. Many of those in the room won't come back, although some will get involved in the learning activities which the core group, (called "The Learning Center of Hopkinton/Cootoocook,") will sponsor. Several will come to the next meeting, set for mid-December, where we'll try to get a core group started.

On the way home that night, I am pleased with the group's response. There's been no great enthusiasm, but the process of developing a core group has begun. What I feel best about it that we had sense enough to know when to stop answering each question ourselves and to let the townspeople begin to assume some leadership.

During the following few months, project efforts in Hopkinton/Cootoocook offered a real test of my ability to function within the "facilitator" role. Facing me, during an evening meeting every two or three weeks, were some ten to twelve local residents: mostly in their thirties or early forties, most newcomers to the area, middle-class, fairly well-educated. I found them to be very friendly, frank, eager to "get involved," interested in learning.



What about this so-called facilitator role? Did you really feel free to make decisions on your own? or did you feel that I was just waiting for you to make the decision which I knew all along you should try to get to, and was simply biding my time until you got there?

ROBBY FRIED

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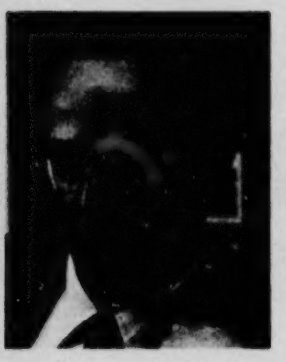

I disagree with the idea that you weren't a leader. You bloody-well **were** a leader! You know how you wanted the thing to turn out. I sat at these meetings and I said to myself, "That damned Robby, why doesn't he **tell** us? We know he's going to get what he wants eventually, anyhow. It's going to be run the way he wants it to go. Why the hell doesn't he tell us instead of making us get to where he wants us to be by subtle little things?"

TOM O'DONNELL, HOPKINTON

I think at first, for a couple of times, I thought you were a manipulator; but then the more I talked to you, I decided you were a facilitator, and you really didn't know. You really did sit back and make us work to find ways to make the core group work. If we came out with some pretty good ideas, you would nod and say 'that sounds good'. And you never said 'lousy idea—terrible.'

GAIL HEIL, COOTOOCOOK

When you are a participant facilitator, it's part of **your** ballgame too. And so I think one thing it's saying is for it to be successful you need to develop relationships with people. When you do, one of the payoffs is that's an additional motivating factor. I think that's good; it's nothing to be embarrassed about.

BOB McGOWAN, DEERFIELD

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They, on the other hand, saw the meetings largely as social events, and resisted at first committing themselves even to the informal structure of the core group ("Why do we have to *organize* this? Why don't just those who want to come get together each time?") They were also somewhat ambivalent about whether or not to broaden the group to include working-class people and older residents of the area in their group.

ADDING "PARTICIPANT" TO "FACILITATOR"

My early experiences with core groups in Hopkinton and other towns soon showed me that although being a facilitator was by far the most agreeable and effective of the three roles discussed earlier—I sometimes wanted to play a more active role than "facilitator" allowed for. So I became a "participant/facilitator."

As a participant/facilitator, I could have the option of either supporting the process currently going on in the core group or of attempting to change some aspect of that process. While I assisted them, I was the "facilitator," but if I wanted to argue for a particular point of view on an issue, I had to show—usually be becoming emotionally more expressive (less "in control")—that I was doing so as a "participant." At other times, in resisting the attempt of the group to resolve a dispute by turning it over to me, I would be careful to facilitate their own decision-making without taking a stand.

As a *participant*, I could openly pursue the kind of atmopshere within a meeting that I enjoy participating in, i.e. flexible, informal, task-oriented, sociable, supportive of input from all present, open to new membership, and capable of reaching decisions through discussion and consensus. Although I'm sure I had more influence on group norms and process, especially at first, then any other single member, I worked hard not to dominate the situation. I knew I was *expected* to be an influential participant, if not an actual leader, because I was coming from the University, because the whole project was my idea.

To have neutralized myself into a purely technically facilitative role wouldn't have worked. Everyone would have known that I had a stake in the process of the core group; they would have tried to "guess" how I felt about whatever was going on.

To withdraw from being a "person working with other persons" and become merely a *role* ("facilitator," "trainer," or whatever) might have had a *manipulative* effect, rather than a facilitative one. Such a withdrawal would have gathered more mystery around the question of my intentions and my agenda. Rather than empowering them, a neutralized facilitator would have ended up by hogging attention to himself.

LEARNING ABOUT RECIPROCITY

The entire CLC Project was based, in the proposal, upon a "Statement of the Problem," and a continual reference to what we thought the "need" was, as far as learning in community was concerned.

This "problem-centered" approach, common to every human services or social welfare program, establishes the perceived "need" of others as the basis for action or remediation. I soon learned that to attempt to meet the "needs" of other people involves an obligation on the facilitator's part to relate to people in terms of reciprocity.

NEEDS AND DESIRES

I am halfway through our initial meeting with a group of people in Rollinsford, N.H., meeting in the rectory of St. Mary's Church, with Father Bedard acting as host. Among others present: a liquor store salesman, the postmaster, a retired druggist, a school-teacher, a housewife. After a rough start, involving questions about how the project might affect the town's tax rate in future years, or what happens when federal funding stops, some genuine enthusiasm for the idea seems to be developing.

Just before we break for coffee, I attempt to summarize what their responsibilities will be, should they decide to become core group members.

"I don't know what your needs are, or the needs of your fellow townspeople," I explain. "But you do. I can't tell you how to respond to those needs, but I ***can*** *help you design educational opportunities that take into account the needs of Rollinsford people as you know them. I—"*

I am interrupted by Fred Green, the retired druggist, who has emerged as an unofficial spokesman for the group. Earlier in the meetings, Fred received a lot of support for his statement about "bringing the people in town with talent together with the people who want to learn," but now he's hearing something he doesn't like.

"Excuse me, Robby. I don't want to offend you, but please stop talking about 'needs.' Don't keep harping on it. People don't like to be reminded about what they 'need'—not even by other people in town."

"Well," I hurry to apologize, "I didn't mean to suggest—" but Fred isn't looking for that.

"No, no. That's alright. It's just that what we're talking about here, if I understand you right, is a way to get more education going for adults here in town. These people have—we hope—a ***desire*** *to learn. Let's not remind them of what they* ***need*** *."*

The others nod their agreement. We break for coffee, and the discussion moves on. But the distinction between "needs" and "desires" sticks in my memory, like some elementary lesson in good manners. I remind myself how easy, how less vulnerable it is for me, as a professional, to operate in terms of other persons' perceived "needs," needs that highlight my skills and provide me with a role. How much more cautious I'm likely to be in attempting to respond to a "desire." And how much more equal the resulting relationship between me and the townspeople will be.

RECIPROCITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Reciprocity and vulnerability, involving the professional "facilitator" and those he or she works among, lie at the heart of the question of "empowerment" versus "delivery of service." When professionals (in medicine, education, social work, law, etc.) perceive clients, patients, or students to be "ignorant," "disadvantaged," "at risk," or as "the target population," such professionals normally feel little incentive to respond to those "in need" as equals. Reciprocity is rarely expected or encouraged from either side. "Recipients" of professionally-administered services are often seen as being neither currently nor potentially able to help themselves, much less be helpful to the professional "service deliverers" (whose social status, not to mention income, is often based upon their superior knowledge, training, and experience in the "problem area").

Although professionals may, at times, worry about how competent they really are, the recipients are the ones who feel truly vulnerable. It is *they*, after all, whom society has found "wanting" (evidence of their neediness underlies the entire social welfare effort). It is they, too, who are often blamed when programs fail—their "apathy" or "lack of motivation" seen as defeating the best efforts of professionals working on their behalf.

The "participant/facilitator" was an attempt to create an alternative role for a professional seeking to *empower* people, rather than to deliver educational programs or services to them as passive recipients.

In becoming empowering facilitators,

professionals must be willing to view other people—regardless of their neediness—as equals in an exchange of ideas, feelings, and actions. Professionals must recognize within *themselves* the ego-emotional-psychological needs which led *them* into helping careers in the first place: the need to be helpful; the need to feel needed; etc. With such an awareness, professionals can enhance the client's self-respect even while addressing the client's, student's, or patient's problems. The process of empowerment involves a *sharing*, not a *delivery*, and that means reciprocity between facilitating professionals and the people they work among. People who have placed themselves on a "superior level" just don't share with people who are "one-down."

A MUTUAL LIBERATION

The empowerment process is less a handing down of knowledge between the professional and other people than a *partnership*, a mutual sharing of ideas, intuitions, and experiences. The professional does not become "less professional" via such a sharing process, but rather gains a much more fundamental sense of personal worth as a member of the human community than is normally acquired from "professional status" in an individualistic, competitive society. The empowering professional as participant/facilitator becomes a partner in a student's, client's, or patient's growth, liberation from ignorance or fears or oppression; and thus does the professional strive for personal growth and such liberation as he or she may be seeking.

Even as the one "in need" is liberated from the one-down status of being seen as society's "client" or as social welfare's "recipient", so the professional is liberated from the charge that he or she is "exploiting" those in need and perpetuating their dependency and inequality. Much of the mutual apprehension and distrust that is felt between students and teachers, clients and social workers, patients and doctors can be removed, once there is mutual understanding that tentativeness and vulnerability—for both parties—is necessary to the process of human development.

Successfully performing the participant/facilitator role means new skills, attitudes, and behaviors for many "professionals." Some of what it took for me to operate within that role is summarized below.

1. Working out of my ignorance. My ignorance about the interests and desires of the townspeople balanced my knowledge of the CLC Project as a whole. I would tell *them* something about the project; they would tell *me* something about themselves and their town. I would try to structure the meetings so that at least 50% of the time we were discussing things which they knew more about than I did.

2. Watching my language. Verbal ability is one of my strengths, but it is easy for me to over-do it. I am supposed to have a good sense of humor, but making jokes invariably draws a group's attention to myself. "Just maybe," an inner voice told me, "I ought to cool it," in favor of creating a more participatory environment.

Also, I had to develop some conversational skills that I didn't have, like the ability to remember people's names, and the ability to listen well and reiterate what people were saying. I had to learn to talk about the project without jargon and without setting a linguistic style—i.e. university dialect—that others might feel obliged to adopt, or fall silent.

3. Facilitating Conversation. I had to learn how not to let myself become the preferred audience for what others in a meeting were saying. It was normal for other participants to address their remarks to me, especially in the first few sessions. But, since their own group-building process was what I sought to foster, I had to deliberately extract myself from the "preferred audience" role, e.g. by looking at other people while the speaker's eyes were on me, until out of mild frustration he or she began addressing the others.

4. Reinforcing their expertise. I recognized

the people I met with as *experts* (relative to myself) in determining what kind of a learning program they and their fellow townspeople might want. The saw *me* as the "expert"—it was my project, wasn't it? I had to violate their expectation that I would tell them what to do, and instead focus my attention on their thoughts and feelings as participants. I was there to learn from *them* so as to be able to help them build learning program. And for me to learn, *they* had to teach.

5. Promoting ownership: active. I knew the project would work only if each core group assumed ownership of its own learning program. I tried to make that clear from the first, and the notion was generally well-received. I minimized any material or financial linkage between the core group and the CLC Project office, so that the core groups wouldn't have to devote energy to bureaucratic paperwork. I tried to participate actively in their discussions—as a participant—to emphasize that I was but one voice within a group for decision-makers.

6. Promoting ownership: passive. Some things I purposely did not do. I refused to have anything to do with a core group's selection of classes, learning activities, or local teaching resources, other than to show support for their attempts to explore new areas of community interest and talent. I arranged it so that I was not present at all core group meetings, so that they could experience running a meeting on their own.

But the hardest part of facilitating their ownership was my struggle to resist the temptation to "take control" of a meeting when things weren't going right. Sometimes, when an issue or a personality within the core group threatened to disrupt or derail the progress of the group, I felt it was up to me to resolve the matter. And yet at such moments I would also be aware that a group's confidence in its ability to make decisions rested to a large extent, on its ability to trust itself to *act* in tough situations. If I were the one who always intervened at such times, I would be reinforcing the group's incompetence. Which doesn't mean I wasn't sorely tempted at times . . .

THE NON—INTERVENTION GAMBLE

It was the second core group meeting in one particular town. The group wanted to do something to help newcomers to the town better understand how town government works, what the duties of various town officials were, and so forth. One older resident, a former selectman, had been especially invited to join the core group because of his considerable experience in town affairs.

The meeting seemed to "take off" and fly on the enthusiasm of the people present, and that allowed me to take a back seat and watch while the core group considered various approaches to a "Town Government" seminar series.

As the meeting proceeded, however, I became aware of a growing uneasiness in the group. The former selectman began pre-empting more and more of the "air time," speaking to every question, offering opinion after opinion without paying much attention to how others in the room might feel. The others began to grow restless and passive. One fellow almost fell asleep in his chair, while another began throwing in slightly sarcastic remarks in a barely audible voice. I sensed a growing resentment of the way the conversation was being dominated, and yet the speaker only increased his volume of words in response to the others' passivity.

I feared that the meeting would end in discouragement and resentment, with

people disassociating themselves from the town government project, and that the core group might dissolve in frustration.

*I felt I **had** to act, to intervene on behalf of the "silent majority" who had been flooded out of the conversation. And then, immediately, I realized that I should **not** intervene, not if I truly respected the other people in the room. This was their meeting, after all. I had chosen to become a participant and resource person, rather than remain as "leader."*

There was no third alternative. I either had to assert myself and try to silence this well-intentioned but over-bearing individual, silence him "for the good of the group," or allow the meeting to take its course and trust that the other group members would find a way to cope with him without offending him. I decided to trust them—and they pulled through with skill and sensitivity.

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7. "Modeling" attitudes and behaviors. Core group "ownership" notwithstanding, I still sought to communicate certain values and attitudes to core group members: educaton for the betterment of the community as well as for individuals; the importance of social relationships in learning; cross-age learning; creating environments for people of different backgrounds to interact etc. In addition, there were my personal values which I listed at the beginning of this chapter; exercising power, learning how society works, collaboration in problem-solving, creating a caring community, and so forth.

I wanted to have my share of influence on how people treated one another within the core group and what the project would mean to other townspeople who became involved in a learning activity. But how? I could not lecture the core groups on what the "right" values should be for them; to have done so would have been to reimpose my leadership on the group.

As a participant, I was free to offer my own opinions on value-related issues that emerged in the course of core group meetings, but also to *model* those behaviors and attitudes in my relations with core group members. I could be supportive of an informal and warm social environment; I could be appreciative of the diversity of backgrounds and experience among those in the group; I could solicit the opinions of those who were less aggressive, verbally, and I could try to involve everyone in consensual decision-making.

To be sure, modeling has its limitations: it's less direct. It doesn't command a group's attention very readily. It can easily be ignored. But for me it was the most authentic way of representing my values while adopting participant/facilitator role.

CONTINUING DILEMMAS FOR PARTICIPANT/FACILITATORS

Several areas of difficulty emerge in considering the "participant/facilitator" role. These difficulties may represent inherent weaknesses in the role itself or may perhaps reflect my own incomplete development of the role.

1. Inability to get one's agenda across. In going from a leadership role (as "initiator") to that of participant/facilitator, one runs the risk of losing too much influence too fast. Invariably, certain preferences of the facilitator for discussion or action by core groups get postponed or avoided altogether in favor of issues more congruent with the immediate wishes and concerns of core group members

themselves. At a given meeting, for example, I might have wanted attention to be paid to broadening the core group to include more community residents who are low-income or working class people.

I might raise that issue as an agenda item or wait until someone said something which touched on the issue and try to generate some discussion on it. Most often, however, these concerns of mine got rather quickly passed over in favor of issues more immediate to the group: e.g. setting up new learning activities, or worrying about publicity.

This dilemma lies at the very core of the role. One gives up one kind of influence—that of leadership of the group—in hopes of gaining another kind of influence—the ability to positively affect a group's own growth in mutual responsibility, decision-making, and capacity for action.

2. Capture of the core group by a "faction." A similar loss of influence can result if only one particular faction of the town's population (people associated with one church, professional couples, newcomers to the town, only women or only men, etc.) becomes involved in the project and gains ownership. Most often, if one identifiable "faction" dominates the core group, it serves to keep others away.

The choices open to a group in such a situation are difficult ones, involving either a) putting aside other tasks and attempting to personally invite into the group people in town with whom they rarely associate (and having to explain to such people *why* they are being invited—which only emphasizes the social differences), or b) going ahead with its work realizing that they are in danger of becoming an exclusive "club."

The options for the participant/facilitator aren't much easier: 1) reminding the core group of the project's—and their own—commitment to broadly-based community representation, and hoping that such a reminder will of itself cause the group to take remedial action (not very likely); b) attempting to "disinherit" the core group from the ownership it has only recently acquired over the project and setting new ground rules for them to get it back (a direct contradiction of the participant/facilitator role, as I see it; or c) being supportive of the core group as currently constituted, while reinforcing any expression of interest from within the group for expanding its membership.

3. Trying to build flexibility and accountability into the core group structure. Ideally, core groups would become flexible enough to permit the interchange of roles among members yet consistent enough to insure that mutually agreed-upon tasks actually get done. Ideally, a participant/facilitator ought to be able to help a group take stock of its leadership needs and balance those needs against the group's preference in self-governance.

In fact, for core groups, as with other new groups, a governing structure is more likely to result from what members *don't* want, than from what they do. In some groups, accountability is sacrificed for the sake of greater informality; in others, leadership goes by default to the one or two people whose skills or whose commitment are strongest. By and large, however, the emphasis on task accomplishment (actually getting activities organized) has provided most of the pressure necessary for core groups to work out a successful pattern of member accountability for at least the month or so it takes to organize a series of activities each season.

Over the long run, some core group members tried to do too much and got worn out, while others in their group were left with little to do. In other groups, inconsistent leadership meant lack of nurturance of the group itself, and as a result I had to re-initiate aspects of the group-formation process at various intervals.

Core group governance has been one aspect which I might facilitate, but not really participate in, since I was so concerned that the "ownership" remain in the hands of the members themselves.

4. Discovering if the project "message" is reaching the learners. Working as inten-

sively as I did with the core groups, I had little time to work with other learners, or instructors, town officials, or school personnel. As participant/facilitator, I stressed that core group ownership meant that *they*—and not myself—had the responsibility of acquainting their fellow townspeople with what the project was and what it meant.

This strategy had some significant advantages. It allowed each core group to translate the project into its own idiom: through posters in grocery stores announcing classes, through articles in town newspapers, by word of mouth, etc. Similarly, it avoided a situation where the facilitator might be seen as bypassing the core group to negotiate, on behalf of the project, with town officials.

But it allowed me no first-hand contact with other townspeople who became involved in the project as learners and teachers. I had no way of knowing, for example, how successful core group members were in facilitating informal and participatory environments within the learning activities. Did the project mean anything besides a free course to learners not in the core group? Were volunteer teachers offered support and guidance from the core group in developing a comfortable and appropriate approach to their tasks? I had no way of learning this directly.

Is there perhaps another, less-involved role for the participant/facilitator in maintaining ongoing contact with core groups—no longer as "participant," but still as "facilitator?"

I believe so—perhaps by bringing together representatives from different core groups to share experiences.

5. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT CORE GROUP LONGEVITY. How long do the core groups last once the participant/facilitator no longer maintains regular contact with them?

That depends on the strength of the core group as an organization and on its ability to renew itself. It depends, for example, on:

a) the quality of the social environment within the group (i.e. the extent to which the core group continues to fulfill social needs of its members);

b) the number of people outside the core group who care whether or not the project stays alive);

c) the core group's ability to bring in new members to replace those who leave, and to train those newcomers as organizers of community learning;

d) the relevance of the project to essential contexts of small community life (e.g. cultural, social, educational, political.)

What is there in the participant/facilitator role which would affect a core group's chances of dealing successfully with the above criteria?

The participant/facilitator should give the core groups a lot of experience in taking responsibility for their own continuity. The facilitator's reluctance to come to each meeting should be but one in a series of stages by which ownership of the project is transferred to the community.

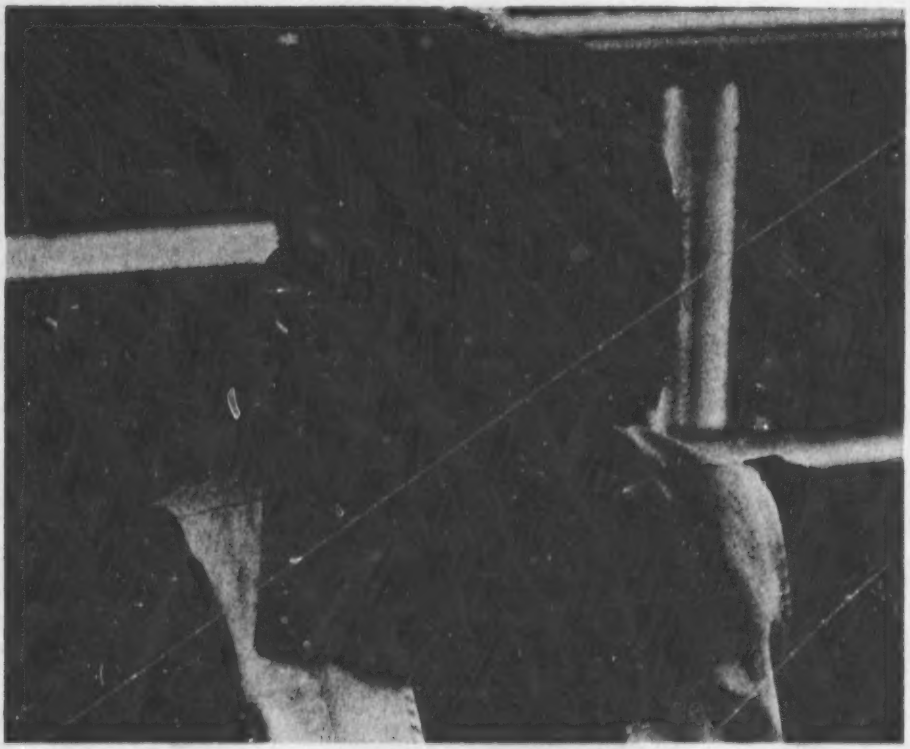
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Several years ago I was greatly inspired by a phrase of Paulo Freire's, to the effect that "every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world." In developing the CLC Project, I found myself in a reverse stance with respect to Freire's words: this time I was beginning with a "concept of man and the world"—a vision of human interaction within small communities—and it was up to me to discover or invent an "educational practice" to actualize that vision.

The "participant/facilitator" role and the community-based "core group" are the instruments with which I have attempted to construct such an educational practice. The training and empowerment of adult learners, within core groups, as planners and organizers of skills-sharing networks within their communities can be viewed as an initial working-out of that practice.

I think we should have had some follow-up into the learning groups that we had going, to know how we were benefitting them. I think that Phyllis and I find it hard today to tell you how it really benefitted the community. We're really not sure because we haven't talked to those people.

IRENE DUNBAR, KINGSTON



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Our school was never really a closed school, but I also think we opened it up more. Our involvement with the school was satisfactory because they had nothing to do with administering our group. We administered it ourselves: we had our own decision-making process independent of the school. Otherwise it would have been more difficult. I think schools always try to take it over. They would not have let it run in any way autonomous from them.

TOM O'DONNELL, HOPKINTON

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Chapter Three

PUTTING THE MODEL TO THE TEST—IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Can A Community Use The CLC Model As A Framework For Any And All Educational Activities At The Neighborhood Level—Or Only For So-Called "Enrichment" Activities (Crafts, Etc.)?

The CLC approach usually involves "enrichment" activities at the start of a town's project (crafts and recreation are the kind of activities Core Group members feel are most easy to begin with). But the CLC approach fostered, in most towns, a willingness to go beyond "enrichment" as soon as Core Group members gained confidence in their ability to organize learning activities, and in their community's willingness to respond to their efforts.

Each successive year saw Core Groups venturing into activities of greater and greater sophistication and depth: a workshop on menopause, helping a community health center get started, organizing programs for teenagers, starting a town newspaper.

So the answer is "yes", the CLC concept can grow with the growing confidence of the Core Group. Such growth is not, however, automatic; some groups choose to remain with essentially "enrichment" activities.

Could The CLC Model Operate For Adult Learners Within The Public School System?

The key difference between the CLC model and existing "Community School" models is "learner ownership." Undoubtedly, a public school system could simply open its facilities to a group of community members who would meet and plan activities that could take place within the school, or anywhere else. If a facilitator were also provided by the school administration, he or she would have to make clear to the group the expectations and constraints imposed by school authorities and how much control he or she expected to assert in group decision-making.

The fact that there are relatively few CLC-type operations within public school systems suggests that where public schools are involved there is a tendency for the facilitator to be a "coordinator" or "director" of the program, with a resulting lessening of learner ownership.

I would certainly not recommend that existing Community School programs adopt the CLC approach unless they are willing to take a hard look at their attitudes towards learners as "decision-makers" (as opposed to seeing learners merely as "consumers of programs and services"). I am sure that, at its best, a Community School Citizens' Advisory Council can look and act like a Core Group, even with a professional program director. If the power of the Advisory Council rests, however, solely on the good will of that director— and not on its own authority, delegated by the school board—then such power is in a sense illusory, because it disappears whenever a director chooses to

ignore the Council.

Can The CLC Model Work With Kids? In The Classroom? After School?

Numerous experiments in the classroom have demonstrated the advantages and difficulties of helping children see themselves as "self-motivated learners" rather than as "people who need to be taught." The CLC approach to "learner ownership" cannot simply be translated into a compulsory education environment for children or credit-or-certificate-based programs for adults. But in at least one New Hampshire town, elementary school children are asked, "What important things do you need to learn which you probably won't learn in school?" and out of the answers have come some after-school learning activities which combine school-based and community-based resource persons.

Does The Facilitator For The CLC-Type Project Have To Come From Outside The Community?

New England has a model for an "inside facilitator" in the role which the Town Moderator plays. This person's job is to help issues get clarified at town meetings, while remaining neutral on decisions to be made. When a Town Moderator does wish to be heard on one side of an issue, he or she will normally step down, temporarily, from the moderator's podium and speak as a participant. But Town Moderators rarely facilitate ongoing groups (as opposed to yearly meetings). An exception is the role which the Town Moderator of Amherst, N.H. has played in a community process for deciding issues of growth and development during the past several years. Called a "Sounding Board," such town planning activities parallel the efforts of CLC's on expanding life-long learning.

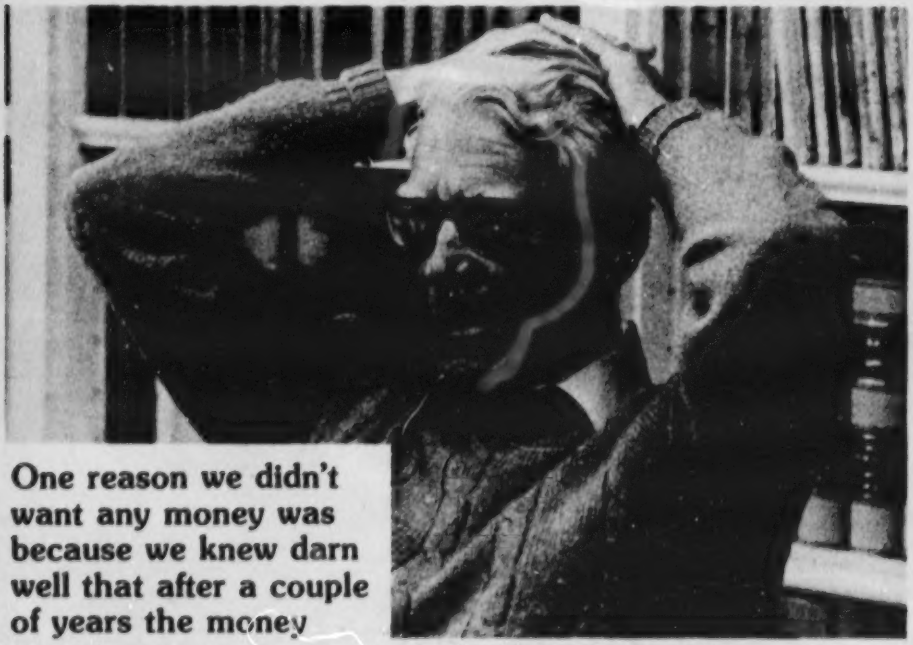
What is crucial in the role of facilitator is not where the person comes from, but rather what skills the facilitator brings to the project-building process. Is the facilitator already sold on one model or willing to present options for Core Groups to consider? Does the facilitator seek to enhance the Core Group's ability to make its own decision? Does the facilitator become less a "leader" and more a "resource person" as time goes on?

How Much Money Is Needed To Start A CLC-Type Program?

A learning group can form without anyone spending a dime, aside from the cost of coffee and cookies prepared for a meeting which takes place in someone's kitchen or livingroom, or in a school room or church basement. No one need get paid for sharing skills with neighbors, or keeping records on enrollments, or offering a room in which people can meet to decide how to improve their neighborhood. Typically, Core Groups have spent some small amounts of money on publicizing their classes and activities, either through mimeographed flyers or posters in local stores. Sometimes these flyers are mailed to persons who have shown ongoing interest in the project. The one considerable expense is, of course, the salary, travel expenses, office expenses, etc. of the facilitator. But it is hoped that in most states such facilitators could be available from the Community Education offices at the State Departments of Education or from College or University Community Education centers, or from other life-long learning organizations, such as the Cooperative Extension Service or enlightened adult education programs.

How Do Core Groups Both Sustain And Change Themselves, And Insure Their Access To New Ideas?

There are two ways for Core Groups to grow: they can develop within their communities, and they can expose themselves to influences from projects and people outside their towns. The most common way that Core Groups change from within is by adding new members with



One reason we didn't want any money was because we knew darn well that after a couple of years the money would run out. And I do think that without the money, without any money involved for overhead or leaders or whatever, you're going to get a better caliber of people.

FRED GREEN, ROLLINSFORD

I was approached to teach quilting at the Kit and Kaboodal, which I did. I felt guilty in taking that money. I didn't want to take the money because, actually, I had more fun and enjoyed giving the free lessons more than I did when I was getting paid for it. I kept feeling I wanted to say, 'Come on up to the house and I'll show you how to do it.'

CAROLINE SEVERANCE, RAYMOND

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different interests and perspectives. A second factor is the desire of Core Group members to keep learning—to take on ever more challenging projects within the CLC framework (e.g. to design programs involving different age groups, community improvement, etc.).

Bringing Core Group members from different communities together to share perspectives and experiences is an excellent way to broaden their horizons, since citizens are far more likely to believe "somebody like me" who has found a new way of reaching people than they are to accept the work of an "expert." Training programs initiated by State Education Agencies or colleges should be sure to allow space for informal "comparing notes" among participants.

How Can A Facilitator "Move" A Core Group Out Of A Pattern Of Activity Which Seems Too Comfortable, Not Risk-Taking Enough?

A "facilitator" by definition, lacks some of the force of a leader or director to influence a group to move in a particular direction, or to change directions. The facilitator is especially limited in ability to influence decisions of *content* since the group has come to rely on his/her leadership chiefly in matters of *process* (i.e. *how* to go about resolving a dispute, rather than *what* solution to adopt). If the facilitator has been successful in that role, Core Group members will feel comfortable treating the facilitator's "content" suggestions as though they were coming from any other group *member*. So how can a facilitator help a Core Group grow faster than it seems to be progressing? Only by identifying *as a member* and seeking consensus in taking on more challenging projects, *or* by withdrawing from the "facilitator" role (on a temporary or longer-term basis) in order to lead a particular effort. The model for such a role already exists: individual Core Group members regularly "take the lead" in organizing a particular project or activity in which they have a special interest. Why cannot the facilitator take the lead in a special effort to extend the project as a whole (e.g. involve residents from different age or social groups, organize activities in community development)?

Is The CLC Project Only *Part* Of What Should Be Happening Under A Total Community Education Effort, Or Is It A Model For The *Whole* Approach?

As a neighborhood, "grass-roots" approach to adult learning and sharing activities, the CLC model could possibly operate as part of a larger Community Education operation, with the larger effort run by a professional individual or team. The professional would have great influence in setting either narrow or wide parameters for Core Group activities within a particular neighborhood. Various neighborhood Core Groups, by meeting and sharing experiences with one another, could assist and inspire each other. On the other hand, it might be interesting to see just how much power Core Groups could evolve collectively or how an empowerment approach—growing out of successful neighborhood-based efforts—could influence an entire city's public education effort. I think that if the neighborhood Core Groups *came first*, established themselves as vehicles for individual and community self-betterment, and elected some sort of steering committee *which then* (and only then) selected and hired a professional administrator, the resulting combined Community Education effort would likely incorporate the spirit of "learner ownership" for the city as a whole.

It's really a question of who's the dog and who's the tail. Is the administrator "wagging" as an outgrowth of a combined Core Group "body," or are "Core Groups" (like "Advisory Councils") merely extensions of the administration? Is the professional administrator the "master" or the "servant" of a representative group of learners?

As a teacher at the Kingston school, I've been able to be a liaison between the school and the community, in arranging for use of the school by the Core Group. And our Business Department at school has helped write up the brochures and run them off for us. I've been able to contact the principal to make arrangements for a room. And then I also had the pleasure of bringing people into my classroom at school and saw that they were comfortable with me as both a neighbor and a teacher. That's been a very good personal thing for me—feeling accepted in both roles here in Kingston.

IRENE DUNBAR, KINGSTON

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PHYLLIS STREETER, KINGSTON

In Kingston we're working on crisis care right now. We have a meeting planned and this whole facilitating process is going on in trying to develop more group homes. We're all concerned with crisis care; it's one of the major problems in our community right now. We're doing it without outside help. We're trying.

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Is The CLC A "Middle Class" Thing? Does It Have Anything To Offer To Low-Income Or Minority Groups?

As practiced in New Hampshire towns, the CLC attracted people to the Core Groups who had both an interest and self-confidence in lifelong learning. By and large, such people were themselves fairly successful in school and are comfortable in the role of "educator". Although at least one-third of CLC learners came from non-middle class backgrounds, the great majority of Core Group members in the six New Hampshire communities were middle class. My colleague, Arthur Ellison, in a doctoral thesis on the CLC Project, has addressed this issue directly:

> Controversy exists in the field of services to low income people over the degree of control or involvement that the recipients of services should have over the systems that have been established to meet their needs. Those persons who view the causes of poverty only in terms of lack of resources, tend to support the proposition that trained professionals in the field of social work are in the best position to determine the problems, resources needed and proper delivery systems for assistance to low income people. On the other hand there are those who believe that only through self-initiated action in their own behalf, will people with low income problems develop the skills and resources to solve those problems.
>
> It is apparent that both the philosophy and practice of the Community Learning Center groups is closely aligned with the position of participant involvement in efforts to solve problems. The results from the questionnaires used in the study and the interviews left little doubt that the process used to build community education in a town is one in which the recipients of the service are also those who develop the process of delivery for the service.
>
> It is obvious that there are few people who could be classified as low income in any of the Core Groups. Whether the range of activities sponsored by the Core Groups would change as a result of more low income participation is unclear.
>
> The attempts to address the problems of low income people have come primarily from individuals in the Learning Center groups who are not part of a low income community. If low income people do not participate or have input into the Core Group process it is doubtful that the programs, classes and activities will be revelant to their needs.
>
> Evidence of the positive impact that the process has upon Core Group members has a corollary in the experiences of low income people who have been involved in some self-help programs in the past. The most striking examples come from people involved in some of the community organization projects of the War on Poverty in the 1960's. In those instances people were able to support the position that their participation had a positive effect upon their self-image.
>
> What changes could be made in the philosophy or practice of the Community Learning Center Projects to increase the potential of the process to assist low income people? Two possibilities exist, (1) design a way by which more low income people would become a part of the local Core Group or (2) start the process in a local community with a group which is made up of a majority of low income people.
>
> The Community Learning Center Projects contain within their philosophy the basic elements necessary for meaningful social action by low income people. Whether or not the use of the process by low income people in a particular community would result in the "enrichment of the total community life" envisioned by their founder is not clear. What does appear clear to the investigator is that the Community Learning Center process formalizes some of the elements of successful self-help efforts by low income people that have been used in the past. Utilizing this process with individuals and groups facing the critical problems of inadequate incomes, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, and inadequate diet is the next step.

What Are Some Indicators That A Community Education Program Is Moving Towards An "Empowerment" Philosophy?

There are lots of places to look: in the way the program is administered; in the functioning of a neighborhood council or citizens advisory group; in the growth and complexity of the programs offered; in the developing sense of leadership among learners.

There is much concern in education, as in other fields, with the concept of "management." "Management" implies the manipulation of people toward achievement of the goals of an organization. "Empowering" people is not "managing" them. An "empowered" Community Education program would see citizens using the program as a base from which to work towards the fulfillment of personal and community goals. The activities generated in such a program would doubtless be enriching to the individuals, but would go beyond the concept of "enrichment courses."

The gutsiness of Council members in speaking and acting upon their expertise as "learners" is another key indicator. Does the Advisory Council spend most of its time dealing with an agenda prepared in advance by the program administrator? If so, it's probably a long way from being empowered.

The most important indicator may be the sense that the learners are engaged in a process which transcends the role of being "consumers of instruction." Certainly, much of the CLC concept is involved with organizing courses and activities. But what makes the concept different is its focus on both individual development (including leadership development) and involvement with needs and problems of the larger community. And this gets us back to administrative considerations. I believe that for learners to focus their attention beyond "enrichment" or "job preparation," or "remedial studies,"—beyond, that is, a narrow definition of what it means to be a learner—such learners need to exercise fundamental control over the program in which such learning takes place.

How Big Should Core Groups Get? What Is The Best Size For A Neighborhood Or Community To Have In Order To Form Its Own CLC?

New Hampshire CLC's were developed within towns of between 1,500 and 3,000 population, so I have no direct experience with the issue posed by the question of size. In my ignorance, I am tempted to suggest that a ratio of one Core Group (of 8 to 15 citizens) for every town or neighborhood of 3,000 population is ideal.

The important issues are: How can we ensure that a Core Group will have a good chance to be able to both represent and communicate with a larger community of would-be learners? How can we avoid a situation where the Core Group represents only one faction of a community (e.g. the middle-class, better educated group)? Does a particular neighborhood, or part of a city, *feel itself to be a community*, and thus see itself as an environment for learning and sharing among residents?

Although the size of population, as well as geographical considerations, are but two of the factors which relate to these issues, I believe them to be crucial factors. Some of us may relate with ease to the notion of a "world community," or of a community encompassing an entire nation, state, or city. But most folks who would be comfortable making decisions for people in their neighborhood might tend to sit back and let the "experts" deal with a larger unit. So if you want a Core Group to include the kind of citizens whom the CLC is likely to attract to its programs, the Core Group should relate to a neighborhood small enough in population and geography for so-called "ordinary citizens" *to feel that they can make an impact*. In practical terms, that size might range from as few as 200 persons to as many as 5,000, in an area as small as one city block up to fifty square miles (in the case of a rural town).

In a larger town or city of 10,000 or more

I think that where our town has grown so fast, the learning group has given the opportunity for a lot of people to get together. It brought a lot of people together of all ages—from grade school through senior citizens—who never would have gotten together if it weren't for the learning group.

CAROLINE SEVERANCE, RAYMOND

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people, the solution might involve setting up several Core Groups which might relate to self-defined neighborhoods for some of their activities and to the entire community for others. Crafts, recreation, home-related skills, for example, might be organized on a neighborhood basis; while a musical or theater group or town newspaper project might enlist the support of several Core Groups reaching out to the whole city. Similarly, pot-luck picnics, local problem-solving activities could be neighborhood-related, while attempts to deal with larger, city-wide issues could involve several Core Groups.

Can The Core Group Model Work As An Instrument Of Advocacy, Either Educational Or Political? If So, What Are The Ramifications?

The CLC Project was created as an instrument of advocacy—advocacy of the philosophy that people are capable of developing a setting, within their small community, to address needs for learning, sharing, sociability, community self-improvement, and so forth. It was further advocated, during the course of the project, that "learner ownership" and "empowerment" were essential if the full benefit of educational programs was to be realized by the intended recipients of those programs.

That said, it would be a great mistake to believe that the CLC approach is easily adaptable to any and all advocacy efforts—from reforming the local school system to throwing the bums out of city hall, securing rights for handicapped children, or fighting off a proposed highway through town.

Most successful advocacy efforts involve strong, dynamic leadership, and that usually means a leader or tight leadership clique who can mobilize public sentiment for or against something. With a few exceptions, (notably, the group-consensus decision-making pattern utilized by some civil rights or anti-nuclear power groups), advocacy leaders seek adherance, rather than consensus. They want to influence people to accept their vision of what should or should not be done. They presume to know what the "right answer" already is.

The ends, or goals, of most advocacy efforts are seen as more important than the means, or processes for achieving the goals. "We want a new school built!" "We want the unfair regulation changed!" "We want a new mayor elected!"—as opposed to the much-less-concrete, "We want to be sure that as each of us strives to learn what he or she wants to learn, we will be increasing our capacity to help our community solve those problems which our fellow citizens will identify as priorities." Empowerment and shared leadership doesn't make for such good slogans.

All this is not to say that the Core Group model of citizen leadership has no application to advocacy efforts. It only means that those who would use the Core Group approach had better be just as concerned for what happens to people in the process of achieving their goals as with the goals themselves. And they had better allow for the goals to be set by the people of the community, rather than imposed upon them.

Why Create Something New (Like Core Groups)? Aren't There Enough Existing Organizations And Agencies Doing The Same Thing?

In communities where the empowerment concept has been embraced by churches, unions, ethnic organizations, or community action agencies, etc., local citizens already have some idea of the kind of personal and social goals which such a concept can help them reach. Some of these same groups have found a way of combining a focus on people learning from one another with other political, spiritual, or economic objectives. Others have not.

I suspect that most such groups focus primarily on one or the other—either on a shared learning experience, drawing upon the

skills and interests of members; or on a more politically-oriented process of uniting to achieve more control over the social forces which affect group members individually and collectively (e.g. neighborhood self-help, minority rights).

In either case, the Core Group model may be useful in expanding the work of the agency or group to include the neglected element—such as encouraging a "Senior Citizens Crafts Club" to look at issues of housing or crime prevention for older citizens; or, correspondingly, suggesting to an ethnic group working on political issues that their organization might sponsor a learning exchange among its members.

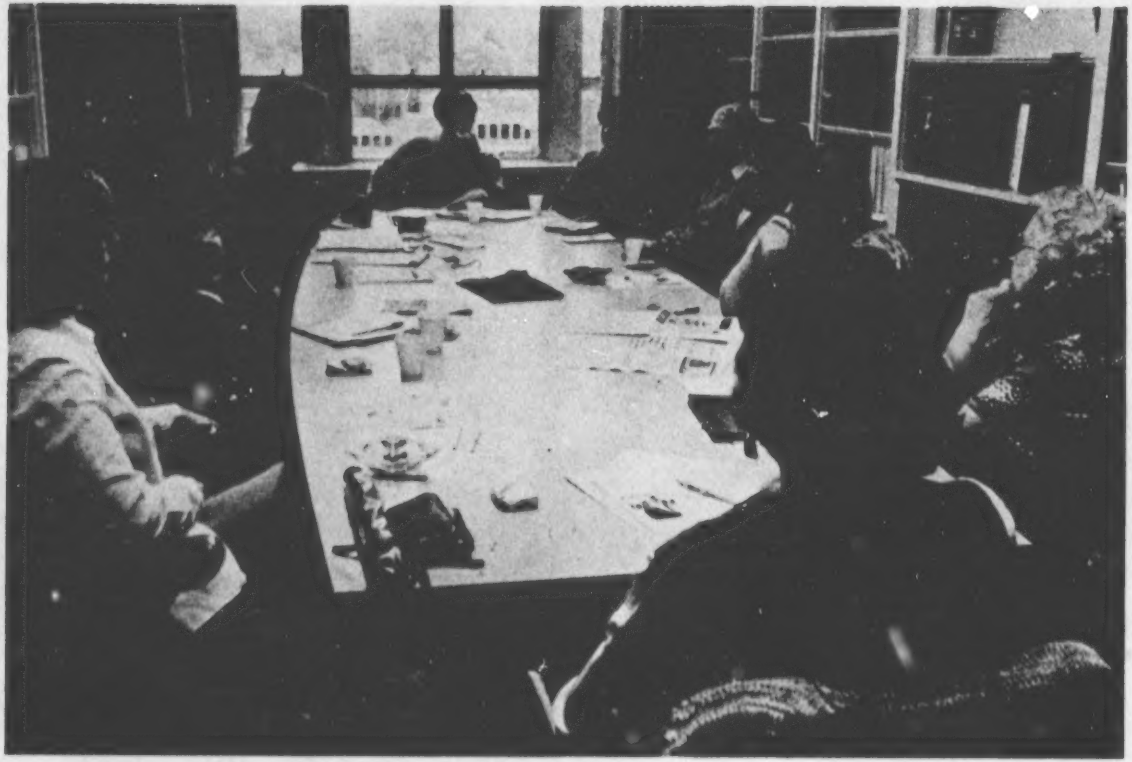
How Divisable Is The CLC Model? Can Parts Of It Be Implemented?

There is almost no aspect of the CLC Model that doesn't already exist as a function of some other program of adult education or community development. Which is another way of saying that the CLC Model isn't so much a "new thing", as a new application of a variety of concepts and techniques to the challenge of helping people develop themselves *in a community context*.

The idea of no-cost learner exchanges isn't new—anything from a bulletin board to a computer can put people who want to learn in touch with people who have the desired skills. Using homes, church basements, libraries, as well as schools for informal learning isn't new—the Cooperative Extension Service people have been doing it for years. Local residents getting together to improve their community and to respond to needs of children, teenagers, the elderly, and so forth, isn't new. Church groups and fraternal organizations do this sort of thing regularly.

The Core Group, as a collection of program recipients—in this case, learners,—who act as both participants and administrators of the activities they organize, and who normally operate on a consensual decision-making basis (as opposed to electing officers, making motions, taking votes, etc.) *is* perhaps, a *new concept*, especially when we look at the increasing tendency of professional agencies to assume roles that formerly were carried out by family, neighbors or churches. As such, the Core Groups operate somewhere between the *ad hoc* level of neighborhood activities (block parties, clean-up drives, pot-luck suppers, informal sports, crafts clubs, etc.) and the professional level of adult education programs, community education programs, recreation programs, etc.

So, aside from the concept of the Core Group and its philosophy of "empowerment" and "learner ownership" there is really nothing left of the CLC model, potentially applicable elsewhere, which is not already happening in some other kind of organization. But in recognizing how rarely other organizations—including educational institutions—create an empowering environment, the uniqueness of the CLC/Core Group model offers some important challenges.



Chapter Four

THE CLC MODEL: A COMMENTARY ABOUT ISSUES

by George S. Wood, Jr.

The CLC Model having been described and its workings examined, there remain some issues to be raised and resolved in regard to its widespread implementation. The purpose of this monograph, it seems to me, is a dual one. First, the Community Learning Center Model and the role of the "participant/facilitator" are worthy of replication wherever a learner-owned model for lifelong learning is sought. Second, the CLC concept has implications for Community Educators everywhere and should be examined in terms of its general Community Education relevence.

The core group concept comes as close to actualizing the combined principles of citizen "self-help", "self-determination", and "human resources development" as any approach with which this writer is familiar. Community Educators presumably value these principles. It would seem to follow that the use of such a model or at least the adaptation of the CLC concept to other Community Education efforts, would spread rapidly if the word gets out and the process is clearly understood.

An Uncertain Reception

There are reasons, however, for believing that this will not happen, or will happen only occasionally unless some present conditions, attitudes, and practices in education (including Community Education itself) can be critically examined and certain necessary changes made.

Undoubtedly, the central and overriding issue is whether the "people involvement" principle, cited so often as a cornerstone of Community Education, is intended to mean "people empowerment", or at least to be extended to include people empowerment. At the moment, it appears that many (maybe most) Community Educators and their sponsoring insitutions across the country either see "people involvement" as stopping somewhat short of "people empowerment" or else haven't directly confronted themselves with the issue. "People empowerment" implies less control and greater risk for the professional educator, even while it promises more potential for personal growth and problem-solving skill development for the lay citizen. There is no arguing that to implement (or adapt) the CLC model presented here means a commitment to people empowerment, whatever its risks for the professional. Without "people empowerment", the CLC model becomes just another program of "adult enrichment" activities.

There are also other key issues for the Community Educator who is attracted to the CLC concept: (1) How can the Community Educator be a true facilitator when that role

runs counter to the traditions and approaches already established in Community Education? (2) How can the CLC approach be adopted in the face of institutional forces which reject or emasculate innovation? (3) To what extent are citizen expectations regarding education and their role in it limiting factors? (4) Are developmental time and action expectations mutually inhibitive to CLC implementation?, (5) Can the CLC leadership approach function in systems where other leadership styles are operating? (6) Will state education agencies and institutions of higher education be able to provide the technical assistance needed for local CLC development?, (7) How can Community Education leadership training support, rather than inhibit, people empowerment leadership efforts?, (8) Are Community Education Leaders prepared and willing to undertake the "risks" inherent in the CLC approach?

The Traditions and Approaches Already Established In Community Education

To some extent Community Education has already in its short history established certain traditions and commonly accepted operational methods. Leadership is expected to be supplied by an employed professional director (and staff) who functions in many of the same ways as a traditional educational or social service agency administrator, with the ultimate responsibility for assessing needs, programming decisions, supervisory tasks, assignment of instructors, etc. Citizen Councils are "advisory" and function at the discretion of the director. The use of school facilities and other public buildings is primary, and the use of homes and other private facilities is at best secondary (and sometimes non-existent). Learning activities function on a semester or 10-weeks or other uniform scheduling basis which closely parallels traditional school patterns. Leaders and/or instructors are expected to meet established or implied "certification" requirements, and so forth. To the extent that the Community Education concept has already been traditionalized and institutionalized, the CLC Model is likely to have a difficult road to travel. "People involvement" (with definite limitations) is one thing; "people empowerment" is quite another. The CLC Model promotes "people empowerment." Educators who are interested in that model should be prepared for the consequences of that philosophy.

Elements in the CLC Model fly in the face of "normal" Community Education practices. The core group takes on many of the responsibilities of a director and staff, whose role is redefined as "facilitator" and "helper". Leadership roles are definitely changed. Indeed, the professionals are expected to function at the discretion of the core group, instead of the other way around. The fact is that the CLC Model envisions the core group ignoring traditional Community Education practices which don't serve the purposes of creating a learning environment especially to their particular town or neighborhood.

It is safe to assume that many Community Education professionals will find such departures from tradition unacceptable because they afford less opportunity for leadership control and personal accountability. In effect, the Community Education Director would be admonished about referring to "*my* enrichment program" or "*my* advisory council" in exactly the same way that Community Educators once admonished school principals and teachers about their attitudes toward "*my* building" or "*my* classroom."

Confronting Institutional Forces

Even where the local Community Education professional and a handful of citizens agree that the CLC Model has merit, extensive implementation is far from assured. Community Education, as evolved from the "Flint Model," nearly always has depended upon the sponsorship and support of the public schools and/or other public systems, each with "its own way of doing things". This

"way of doing things" in each system rarely is a response to the unique character and needs of the individual communities. From community to community, the landscapes are different; the people are different; many of the problems are different; but the organization and operation of the systems are the same. School districts, recreation departments, social service systems, etc., resemble much less their individual communities than they do their counterparts in other communities. Such systems historically have resisted incorporating projects and procedures which radically depart from normal operational practices and methods of accountability. The existing system is seen as being endangered, or at least unreasonably inconvenienced. Therefore, in dozens of large and small ways such systems pressure "innovation" to become more accommodating to institutional requirements until the innovation is either unrecognizable or re-rejected. The CLC Model and its people empowerment operation is likely to depart in major ways from normal procedure for most existing systems, even those already engaged in "Community Education."

An alternative that such systems may seize upon is, of course, to run a small "CLC project" as a kind of step-child, functioning so far from the institutional heart that it poses little concern for the main body politic. It would be ironic if some Community Education programs which are themselves treated like minor appendages by their institutional bases in turn develop a similar relationship with local CLC efforts.

The Expectations Of Community Citizens Regarding Education And Their Role In It

People who are the products of American education are used to being told what they must learn, how they are to learn it, and who will "teach" them. For most, therefore, it is expected that public education will function in this manner. Only if one is a teacher, administrator, or school board member does one have an active role in determining learning content and procedures. Who ever heard of the learners deciding what they will learn, deciding how they are to learn it and teaching each other? Who indeed? Here's Dr. Fried:

"I was often obliged to violate the expectations which local residents, brought together to create a core group, had of me as an "educator." They often asked what *I* wanted *them* to do and seemed, initially, to lack confidence in their own legitimacy, as "learners", to make such decisions in their own self-interest."

This issue may signify a major stumbling block in implementing the CLC Model. It is not so much that this expectation can't be changed. Dr. Fried's accounts of his experiences suggest that it can, with patience, facilitative skill and openness. The issue is likely to be how much patience and facilitative skill and openness needs to be exercised and whether Community Educators are willing to commit themselves to the necessary amount of each. It will be all too easy to give up on the Model by reaching the premature conclusion that "they couldn't understand it," or "they didn't want to do it."

Developmental Time And Action Expectations

One of the principles frequently associated with Community Education, and in particular the hired professional is that the action is swift and the visible program outputs begin almost immediately. There is, of course, an administrative corrollary related to this action principle: if outputs are to come quickly, then the director must do most of the work and not wait for others to get it done. Historically countless opportunities for "people involvement" in Community Education programs have been unrealized because this principle and its corrollary were operating. The CLC Model can very easily become a Community Education casualty on the same basis. No one who has read this publication

can doubt that impatience for results by the community or the professional can seriously hamper the potential for broader, long range people involvement and commitment and action resulting in relevent substantive program activities, will also be apparent to the reader. Still, the trade-off is not an easy one for professionals or citizen committees who are "under the gun to produce."

What is needed is some rethinking of the notion that producing large enrollments or many program activities in the shortest possible time is to be valued most. The history of countless, otherwise worthy, educational ideas that have promised immediate results to an impatient public, relied upon generating faddish enthusiasm, and then died for lack of substantive public commitment suggests a lack of wisdom in always holding to such a value. Where the process itself is critical to success, as it is with the CLC Model, having enough time for the process to develop is also critical.

Conflicts With Other Leadership Styles And Responsibilities

The local Community Education professional is almost without exception a hard working person who must "wear many hats," that is, assume many leadership roles in a comprehensive programming setting. At best, it is difficult to change one's leadership style from moment to moment to meet the demands of particular situations without seeming inconsistent and ill-coordinated. If a director "makes the decisions" in one program area, how does (s)he shift gears and avoid doing so with projects such as the CLC, particularly if some of the same citizens participate in both or all program arenas? Can an "advisory council" be operated in the same general programming framework as a "core group" without confusing people and raising questions about inconsistent leadership behavior? Consistency of leadership behavior and expectations may very well become an issue in the implementation of the CLC Model within a larger, diverse Community Education program approach.

On the other hand, for a professional who is willing to risk some initial discomforts, CLC-type activity within a larger program setting can result in some very valuable learning about people empowerment. Indeed, it would seem that such learning, when applied to other program settings, could lead to more effective leadership throughout the Community Education program.

The Assistance Capacities And Practices Of State Education Agencies And Institutions Of Higher Education

A key element in the broad usage of the CLC concept will almost certainly be the availability of appropriate consultant assistance from SEA's and IHE's. Where the consultants fail to understand the Model, do not encourage its usage, they are ill-prepared to help local leaders develop such critical ingredients as the facilitator role, or are not able to help local leaders resolve some of the issues being raised in this discussion, the Model can be expected to have limited appeal and implementation. The hard questions and the special skills are not just local issues. They are questions of philosophy and operation basic to the educational process itself. And, like it or not, answering those basic questions is widely seen as the responsibility of state education agencies and colleges/universities who have the time, resources, and expertise for such things. Though local leaders will often not admit it, the messages and the help (or lack of it) that come from SEA's and/or IHE's are important, often critical, to local Community Education efforts, particularly efforts to implement significant change.

State Education Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education must reconsider policies or tendencies which result in such consultant behavior as: working only with/through local school administrators; providing only ideas and materials without personal implementation assistance; assuming that "touching bases" with many communities is

I experienced you being there as an expert who knew what was going on in some other communities, and based on that experience and things that you knew, kind of helped the group to test out some boundaries and sometimes to expand them, like membership, including more people or whatever. I don't think our group would have gotten off the ground if it hadn't been for a leader's presence, and your style of leadership was very effective. I don't think, on the other hand, an expert from the State Department of Education telling us what to do would have gone beyond the first 15 minutes.

BOB McGOWAN, DEERFIELD

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more important than providing extensive assistance to a few; and associating only with local "status quo" activities to avoid controversy. And, of course, with the commitment to provide more in-depth, consistent community-wide assistance comes the need to develop the capacity to do so. One has a sense that too many SEA's and IHE's operate with a consultant philosophy that was formulted for the 1940's and 1950's, even in their community education efforts. The demand of effective CLC Model assistance is only one of many reasons why this mid-century philosophy needs some revising.

Present Leadership Training Focuses

Although no one, including this writer, has a complete picture of all of the Community Education leadership training that has been going on across the nation, the perception here is that "people empowerment" is not a common or major goal in most of such training. The participant/facilitator role, for example, has not been presented as a critical element in such training. Instead, leadership planning and decision-making and influencing (community relations) and supervising have been the critical elements, both in short term training programs and in longer range certification or degree programs. Clearly, the omission of people empowerment leadership skills emphasis leaves professionals with very little preparation for (and possible little interest in) implementing such models as the CLC. The widespread implementation of CLC-type projects would seem to depend to some extent upon the availability of related leadership training opportunities.

One wonders why such training for "facilitating citizen empowerment" does not exist. Is it because trainers (largely university and state department staff people) have little or no personal faith in the citizenry? Because they themselves do not possess such skills? Because they are locked into systems which place little value on such things? Because they are unwilling to risk changing "what has always worked" (although "what has always worked" may be more myth than reality)? At the very least, some clearcut statements on this issue should be made by the present cadre or institutions and individuals providing Community Education training. If approaches like the CLC Model are to be implemented, those who can and will provide relevant training must surface and perform.

The Matter of Risking

Change involves "risking". People empowerment efforts which run counter in educational and institutional tradition involve a great deal of risking, at least at the outset. Even those professionals who understand and theoretically support such approaches as the CLC Model are ultimately confronted with the decision as to whether to "risk" their professional images (and maybe their jobs) in an effort to implement. There is hope in that there are many examples of Community Educators who have dared to be innovators, who have committed themselves to instituting change even in the face of heavy odds, who have been willing to do the necessary risking. In fact, Community Educators have a bit of a reputation for such behavior. Dr. Fried goes further on the subject of risking:

> Obviously, such experiments involve risks, as well as promise benefits. Some will argue that any effort to weaken the school's role in educating the public will lead to parochialism, sectionalism, perhaps even racial segregation, that it will open the door to the exploitation of the community by charlatans and demagogues posing as "educators", and so forth. Recent community crises involving busing, school prayers, and controversial textbooks are offered as examples to support the view that education must be left in the hands of professional teachers and school administrators if we want to maintain our schools as places where children can be exposed to a wider range of values than that of a single social class, race, or religion.

But such conflicts can also be seen as resulting from the systematic denial by public education of a community's meaningful participation in the education of the young, and from citizen frustration which stems from the feeling that education is controlled by a professional "elite" who are remote from the communities in which they teach and who are strangers to the families of the children they face in the classroom.

A Final Issue

There are some (particularly professional educators) who may seek to reject the CLC Model and other similar people empowerment approaches because they see them as a strategy for "deschooling." In closing, Dr. Fried:

> The CLC Model has never seen as its purpose the "deschooling" of society. Invariably, as core groups were being formed in participating communities, someone associated with the local schools—a teacher or school secretary or school board member—was one of those who volunteered to help the group organize itself. Those school people who have remained active have done so because they wanted to enhance the standing of their particular institution in the community. From the first, several core groups chose to hold some of their learning activities in school shops and classrooms. In three of the six participating communities, a local school principal has offered school facilities for core group-sponsored learning activities, and in two other towns negotiations between the core group and school board officials has resulted in similar arrangements. But if the purpose of the CLC Model has not been to "deschool", neither has it been to act as a instrument for extending the jurisdiction of formal schooling to other segments and "target populations" within the community.
>
> The CLC Model's purpose has related most closely to the concept of educationally re-endowing the community. It is my belief, and my hope, that by initiating a program of informal skills and interest-sharing among adults, a community can become more aware of the plentiful resources for teaching and learning that it already possesses. Some core group may wish to carry forward the idea of teaching/learning/sharing interaction as an alternative to the way their public schools operate. Another core group may wish to throw its support behind an effort to build a new "community school" that would open its doors to people of all ages for teaching and learning.
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> The CLC approach is designed to help create a climate for educational rethinking within participating communities, by helping local residents realize not only that a great many more potential resources exist than are currently sharing in the community's education but, equally important, that learners themselves are the ones who should decide how such resources are to be developed. A society in which large numbers of people feel confident in contributing to their own education and to the learning of other people is a society in which massive "deschooling" is unnecessary. A society which has "re-endowed" itself educationally, by encouraging all to share freely in the teaching-learning process, is a society well prepared to deal with educational problems and educational possibilities, now and in the future.

In Summary

The issues raised here suggest that implementing the CLC Model and similar approaches will not be an easy road to travel. They are not intended to discourage the Community Educator, but to prepare him/her. If there is a message in all of this, it is that in proceeding with the CLC Model one should be aware of the risks, the potential road blocks, the need for facilitative leadership skills, and the professional fortitude that are involved.

The writer remains confident that Community Education can produce people empowerment processes and outcomes, but concerned that there does not yet seem a clearcut vision and commitment for doing so. It appears that Community Education, in its evolution, may have reached the point of decision about whether it is to be a significant

people empowerment force or will limit its vision or purpose to the structuring of professionally conceived and managed community services. How the reader responds to such ideas as the CLC Model is indicative of a personal vision. How the multitude of Community Educators ultimately respond is likely to determine the national vision. At the very least, this publication should help people understand what the issue is.

So many things have happened in Kingston, I think, as a result of our project. I think the community is alive now. It was dead, I feel. There's a lot of interaction between the community and the school now. And I feel that we are a part of that growth. We broke down some of the barriers.

PHYLLIS STREETER, KINGSTON

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CAROLINE SEVERANCE

There's something about the warmth of the core group, the non-threatening aspect of it—the feeling of being sort of a cosy group within the town. I think that most of us always meet sitting around Caroline's kitchen table with coffee and something she's baked. You feel at home; you feel comfortable.

JILL DZIECHOWSKI, RAYMOND